

The Role of Media Communications in Developing Tourism Policy and Cross-Cultural Communication for Peace, Security for Sustainable Tourism Industry in Africa

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Abstract

The objectives are : (1) to highlight the theoretical or conceptual implications of: the new media communication technologies, globalisation, and cultural contestations on the Africa's tourism industry; (2) to present an overview of the current challenges of tourism policy issues and options in Africa and how they can be slowed, halted and reversed by media communications campaigns process; (3) to explain the specific pattern of media effects by the new technologies on the development of culture in the African countries; and (4) to discuss appropriate media communications technology options for promoting sustainable tourism, peace and conflict resolution , cultural competence and inter-cultural communications in Africa .The presentation of the paper is informed by the relevant theoretical and conceptual framework, reviews of national service statistics, relevant national ICT policy documents and media communication technology data. The author argues that new media communication technologies are vital players in catalyzing local, national and global tourism business development and inter-cultural dependency between Africa and the western world. Africa is a potential major market source of revenues for local and foreign tourism industry products and services. The loss of Africa's market shares in the global tourism arena is attributable to its lack of competitiveness. Several marginalized languages are dying on the continent due to intolerance, cultural repression, cultural illiteracy, cultural incompetence and negative globalisation effects. Selective applications of communications technologies embody social values and are imperatives for achievement of the African millennium development goals and objectives. At the same time, these technologies have become the engine spurring the letter and spirit of global cultures with remarkable impacts on the African society today. The influence of globalisation on worldwide culture is rapidly spreading. Globalisation employs efficient and effective mass communication tools such as electronic and computerised print media to provide global knowledge using infotainment (information and entertainment), education and communication behaviour change campaign strategy. There are many patterns of spreading influence. The media has a social responsibility to promote and update knowledge. The technological evolution of the communication media contributes to the new cultural and ideological dependency. Community (media) broadcasting and satellite broadcasting has entered many African countries with or without regulatory framework. African policy makers should now focus more on the issue of technological convergence, deregulations, and public ICT policy awareness campaigns. Conceptually, there are areas where Africa's competitiveness in sustainable tourism development can be identified and strengthened. Training, capacity building, research and infrastructure development and good governance based on gender equity are critical for Africa's competitiveness in the global scene. Media communications would ensure that the African region has access to quality information through public awareness campaigns based on development communication theories where all the stakeholders are actively involved in the entire process of the campaigns, that is, from message designs, to campaigns implementations to evaluations for campaigns effectiveness. Africa is one of the new areas where the increasing number of major global tourism products and services are being developed.

The continent's domestic markets are favourable for the currently less tapped eco-tourism markets. Africa has a potential huge source of revenues for the international and local actors in the current and future tourism industry.

Introduction

Media communications technologies are imperative for frontline investments for sustainable globalised tourism development indicators. The powerful effects of media communications technologies can dawn on the African continent with sweeping changes of attitudes and behaviour among the key actors in local, national and global tourism for peace, security and sustainable development. The social, cultural, economic, political and environmental benefits of tourism would usher in monumental and historic changes in the African Union. As the verdict goes, the media has a social responsibility to enhance the blending of local, national and international cultural values for enriched politics, society and economy in Africa. Public communications strategy based on access to quality information and knowledge will drive the new global tourism partnership for Africa to heal the current North-South widening gaps through partnership initiatives such as: peace and security, conflict resolutions for eco-tourism, quality tourism, joint ventures, technology transfer, exchange bids, subject-to-subject attitude, being explicit about values, transparency in interests, clear standards, sticking to mutual agreements, capacity building and development, institutional building and observance of tourism ethical standards.

Development communication is one of the best ways to go in developing eco-tourism in Africa. This strategy involves the planned communication component of programmes designed to change the attitudes and behaviour of specific groups of people in specific ways through person-to-person communication, mass media, traditional media or community communication. It aims at the delivery of services and the interface between service deliverers and beneficiaries where people are empowered to by informed choice, education, motivation and facilitation effecting the expected changes. This can be done by media advocacy targeting all key stakeholders involved in the tourism industry. Effective use of communication techniques can barriers and promote better uses participatory message design which combines both traditional and modern media. Participatory communication strategy design (PCSD) methodology is used to build on the results of the participatory rural communication appraisal (PRCA). It involves a systematic process for participatory communication strategy design, and the principles for communication planning, message development, multimedia material production and the implementation of communication activities in the field.

British war-time premier Sir Churchill saw the "Pearl of Africa"

Some of the basic concepts and principles of ecotourism rotate on catchwords like: environmentally and culturally-oriented tourism; conservation of natural resource enhancement tourism; local community based socio-economic welfare tourism; participatory community development of tourism. Uganda is emerging from years of

political instability and entrenched poverty. Soon after 1971 military coup which ousted President Milton Obote from office, Uganda's flourishing tourism industry was dealt a death blow by a series of political upheavals and social turbulence which ravaged tourism industry in the country. Tourism is now waking up once more in Uganda, a country which was once described as the "Pearl of Africa", by the British war-time Premier, Sir Winston Churchill.

Uganda's unique rich biodiversity makes it a natural candidate for ecotourism industry because tourism is currently the best product and service which Uganda can market globally with increasing competitiveness. Some of the key principles of sustainable tourism development include the following:

- Tourism should be initiated with the help of broad-based community-inputs and the community should maintain control of tourism development;
- Tourism should provide quality employment to its community residents and a linkage between the local businesses and tourism should be established;
- A code of practice should be established for tourism at all levels - national, regional, and local - based on internationally accepted standards.

Eco-tourism seeks to provide yardsticks for tourism activities, environment impact assessment and auditing. Sustainable tourism guarantees the optimal use of environmental and natural resources for sustainable development among government, the private sector and communities. Ecotourism is sustainable tourism that caters for the ecological conservation of both human and natural ecology.

The challenges and issues in developing eco-tourism policy in Uganda

There are some basic challenges and issues affecting the development of sustainable tourism policy in Uganda and the rest of Africa. A glance at the current Uganda's Tourism, Trade and Industry (MTTI) policy and working documents, depicts the country more or less as a plausible "work-in-progress". The ministry has a policy desk. The role of ministry is to formulate and support strategies, plans and programs that promote and ensure expansion and diversification of tourism, trade, cooperatives, environmentally sustainable industrialization, appropriate technology, conservation and preservation of other tradable national products, to generate wealth for poverty eradication and benefit the country socially and economically. Since 1990, the World Bank and Global Environmental Facility (GEF) have stepped up investment development for conservation potentials of ecotourism. In 1995, GEF initiated a US\$4 million ecotourism project in Uganda, and a similar initiative was planned for Zimbabwe.

Ugandan law protects national parks and reserves for the highest conservation standards. The main snag here is inadequate resources to monitor legal and policy compliance, although a project component was launched to provide effective patrols and economic incentives to the local communities. The media would be instrumental in communications campaigns and better coverage. Media campaigns could be an effective

check on the unscrupulous activities of eco-tourist agents or agencies including the public sector actors. Although the Ugandan National Environmental Action Plan covers the whole country, its implementation has been ignored in some parts of the country due to poverty. There is a huge uncertainty about the sustainability of the current ecotourism initiatives in the county on the grounds that the current formula for revenue sharing among the stakeholders cheats the operators.

The national (NEMA, 2004/5) tourism policy was formulated to promote economy and livelihood of people, especially poverty reduction development of sustainable and quality tourism. Though the number of tourists has significantly increased by about 68.18% between 2003 and 2004, the visitors' numbers to protected areas (PAs) is relatively lower due to inadequate security situation in some protected areas, and lack of implementation of a sound marketing strategy and the new tourism safety plan. Tourism plays a major role in Uganda's economic development. But over the years, the industry has suffered bad publicity which has contributed to its slow progress. For example, the protracted civil strife in Northern and Western parts of Uganda has affected tourism development in the country for peace and security reasons. Uganda has registered low figures from its major tourists' sources like UK and USA.

Urgent challenges facing tourism sector in Uganda are: institutional weakness; lack of appropriate legislations and legal framework; pressure on the protected areas (PAs); local conversion of land for alternative uses; and lack of funding to run the industry. Greening (EU, 200) tourism industry is a multidisciplinary approach aimed at: better dispersion of tourism in time and space; promotion of environmental friendly forms of tourism; reduction of private car use in favour of public transportation; better management of mass tourism; and eco-awareness of tourists. A lot of local initiatives to prevent gross pollution by waste- soft drink-cans, plastic bags, mineral water bottles. EU tourism development issues are: public and industry awareness of the dangers of mass tourism; development of eco-tourism; more responsible management of tourism at member-states level (awarding of tourist eco-levels); the exponential development of tourism sector; development of environmentally friendly tourist activities; the undermining of environmental policies in sensitive areas by tourist activities; lack of clear regional strategy for promoting a more environmentally friendly tourism; and the fact that tourism sector's environmental impact can't be fully evaluated because of the fragmentary nature of information available.

Peace and security issues in Uganda's tourism eco-industry

Gorilla tourism in Uganda was suspended for several years in order to avoid the risks of very frequent gorillas-human interactions for a while. Uganda's tourism industry is quite small owing to the emerging ecosystems investment development in the country. There is cause to fear that some of the ecosystem elements may be affected by local people who are less informed about the current eco-conservation guidelines. There are several environmental problems in and around the biodiversity rich conservation zones

in Uganda. In some cases many people found themselves in these areas as a result of civil wars, abject poverty in their villages, and poor social service delivery by both the local and central governments.

Rapid deforestation in Uganda is nationwide in both urban and rural local communities mainly as a result of eco-suicidal government investment projects and the overwhelming national dependence on biomass fuel for cooking, boiling, lighting, drying and space heating. Increasing numbers of visitors also increase demand for fuel. Rich biodiversity are being abused by eco-illiterate tourists who roam their natural habitats. The lands within the Bwindi and Mgahinga parks are part of the threatened Afro-montane forest. The only remaining population of the highly endangered mountain gorilla lives in Uganda. In August 1989, the Ugandan game department stopped gorilla tourism on the advice of biologists. Deaths of gorillas as a result of human contact and infection had been reported in neighbouring countries. There was also a notable lack of professional supervision over Ugandan gorilla habitats. After the ban, steps to be taken to implement governmental policies for the integration of conservation into tourism were defined. More generally, tourists, even ecotourists, may not be so utterly conscious as to not litter along their way. Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest is home to not less than 300 mountain gorillas, which stand for about half of the world's species' population.

Prospects and problems of eco-tourism development activities in Uganda

In 1991, the local farmers living near Bwindi Rainforest Park in Uganda were legally prevented from accessing the traditional areas where they used to harvest firewood and herbs as a result of a new conservation project set up by an NGO. The alienation of the poor farmers caused a stir but it was rectified by involving the local farmers in environmental, economic and community development activities. Their interests were met when some of the US\$4 million GEF project money was used to build health clinics, schools, fund the park management and eco-research. The European Development fund (EDF) is also funding Uganda sustainable tourism development programme to strengthen tourism industry to benefit the rural communities in the protected areas and to develop the current community tourism projects there.

Due to the current slow performance of the industry in Uganda, there are still very few new investment development initiatives so far. The ministry is under funded and there is little wonder that the result has been minimal development. Uganda's national tourism industry's has some of the most enthusiastic private sector actors. Unfortunately they are less professionally equipped to perform their perceived role in the industry. The current legislations guiding the development of tourism in Uganda are under review and the proposed human resources development programmes have not yet got off the ground. The tourism sector in Uganda is still underutilized, under capitalized, underdeveloped, and the private sector is paying a high price due to low profit margins from their reinvestment.

There is a loud cry for a big improvement in the quality and standards of services, products and operations in the business. There is evidence of poor performance and slow investments in the enterprise. There is weak capacity in both the public and private sectors as the single most difficult challenge. At the same time the lack of capacity in the private sector cannot be ignored. If the overall Government policy of a private sector driven industry is to be achieved, continuing work will be required to achieve success. The EU has funded the private sector foundation of Uganda (PSFU) to implement the institutional strengthening of private sector groups. Uganda's eco-friendliness is attested to by the creation of six more new national parks and many community-based eco-tourism projects with components to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS while promoting women's rights.

While the local climate is very fine, Uganda has experienced intermittent armed clashes and civil strife in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the influx of refugees into the country's national parks. Media reports indicate that the UWA is collaborating with the security agencies to monitor the security situation along Uganda's common international border with DRC. Several security measures are being implemented to ensure the safety of the tourists visiting our national parks and all the other tourist areas and the regular influx of refugees into the country is part of the national peace, security and tourism conflict situations to be handled by the government. The three neighbouring countries of Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC have planned to run a single pricing system for gorilla tourism. Each of the three Great Lakes countries provides gorilla trekking services by various tour companies. All the three have decided to unify the procedures for booking gorilla permits, making payment refunds, providing business incentives to the private tour operators. Until recently, persistent civil and political conflicts, poaching, illegal trade and ecological degradation resulted in the decline of biodiversity loss in many parts of the country.

Biodiversity poaching has plagued Uganda's tourism industry at alarming rate countrywide. It is only recently that tens of poachers have decided to either resign or retire from the poaching business in Uganda. The new found hope cuts across many African countries including the Cameroon in West Africa. The "dark days" of poaching are predictably coming to a sober end as scores of illegal hunters have started to down their tools in response to an open amnesty by the Uganda Wildlife Authority. Until recently, Uganda was dogged by a "loud absence" of the White Rhino species from among its national biodiversity bank. The apparent climb-down by many Ugandan poachers was attributed to a national education and awareness campaigns for behavioural change in Uganda.

Uganda now has six more rhinos at Ziwa Rhino sanctuary and this figure is projected reach 20 in the coming years. The country still has to come to terms with the following bottlenecks: low incomes; low public awareness at national and international levels of the potential of tourism, weak collaboration and coordination in the tourism

development process and a lax commitment by private actors in the country. Some of the (NEMA, 1986) key issues which put in doubt, the sustainability of Uganda's wildlife management survival are: persistent land use conflicts; cancerous poaching; illegal settlements within protected areas; eco-hostile tourists' behaviour; conflicting national laws and policies. The main objectives of the national wildlife policy 1995 are to: ensure in perpetuity for Ugandans and the global community, the wildlife resources within and outside protected areas and to enable the people of Uganda to derive ecological, economic, aesthetic, scientific and educational benefits from wildlife.

The crux of the matter is to include the rural people who share much of the land with wildlife in the new business. Uganda is (NEMA, 1988) known for its rich wildlife species some of which are endemic in the country. Uganda's biodiversity is ranked among the top 10 countries in the world specifically the mammalian species. The country hosts 11% of the global birds and over 50% of the world's mountain gorillas. The major national constraints facing the country's wildlife resources include: land use conflicts, illegal resource harvesting, policy failures, instability and civil strife, and financial constraints. The forest department (NEMA, 1988) in Uganda has started pilot activities in eco-tourism as a viable option for non-consumptive use of forests. Infrastructure has been development in Mabira, Budongo, and Mpanga forest reserves and both sites are already registering unprecedented figures of the local and foreign eco-visitors, the current trends show.

ICTs public campaigns and policy strategies for sustainable tourism in Africa

African countries should promote the use of effective information and communication technology (ICT) public campaigns and policy strategies for widespread adoption of sustainable tourism, peace and conflict resolution, cultural competence and mutual inter-cultural communications in the continent. The audience access to the intended information (media messages) is the main determinant of the choice of media strategy to adopt for effective tourism campaign strategy. A combined mass media and interpersonal communication approaches would achieve maximum audience exposure to the intended media messages. ICT innovations should allow users to find and use relevant information and give a feedback in a similar fashion. Institutional capacity building project for protected areas management in Uganda in the ministry of tourism, trade and industry (MTTI) and the national tourist board of Uganda (World Bank, 2002) has begun. The funding covers a national information communication and policy strategy for the country.

Appropriate use of information communication technologies (ICTs) can increase the credibility and effectiveness of projects to improve access to quality information, transparency in public sector decision-making, capacity building in both the private and public sectors. The policy objectives of the ICTs project are to: develop a national information and communication strategy; establish a national ICT policy; promote the use of ICTs for development; implement an integrated public sector information

management system; improve transparency in fiscal accountability oversight; and set up a national web-site.

Developing public communications campaigns for sustainable tourism in Africa is the bedrock for achieving sustainable development for poverty reduction in the African Union. One of the main reasons is that sustainable tourism is the basis for the attainment of sustainable peace on the continent. Tourism in Africa is synonymous with environment and natural resources. Indiscriminate destruction of our natural resources is a sure recipe for the current mass poverty in Africa. It is a living reality which deserves global approach. Awareness campaigns are critical for effective policy, constitutional and legal implementation of sustainable tourism principles, plan, goals and projects in Africa and globally. Effective information and communications strategies are crucial for policy and decision makers themselves who are often the divers of natural resources destructions on the continent.

The effects of mass media on the contemporary culture and society in Africa

The media are agencies of mediation in that in reporting events they propose certain frameworks for the interpretations of those events. They mould or restructure our consciousness in socially and politically consequential manner. It can be said that the media is a part of social reality which shape our perception. A case in point is the "reality TV" programming. The reality-defining role of the TV programming (Croteau, D & Hoynes, W, 2000) is a propaganda function of the press in that each media tends to recruit public support for the political or social philosophy it favours, seeks to sell a particular political or social definition of the events it reports. Analysts like Evans (1999:405) argue that the invasion of reality TV has begun and the craze is set to grow in United States and its effect will overlap to Africa due to its popularity with young audiences. Media programs such as Survivor and Big Brother have proved to be big winners for the network. Reality TV programming format meets both local and international needs because of its sensationalism and trivializations based on real situation and involving the real people.

The internet transcends the censorship and regulation imposed on radio and television. The internet granted the freedom enjoyed by print media and common carriers such as letters, mails, and cable to the public media. Through audio streaming it is possible to enhance the reach of radio signals to any part of the world. The internet's vast capacity enables each media house to exhaustively investigate and publish in-depth analyses. Internet radio is not limited to audio as pictures, images, digital files and graphics are accessible to the users. Advertisers and their audiences can easily interact via the internet radio broadcasts.

The internet technology provides interactivity with the trainer or educator and other information for business and advocacy services , internet radio could charge for listening or viewing, offer a music or video clip for free, but charge for the full song,

album, or video. Chibita in Nassanga (2003), argues that appropriate (local) media content arises if one considers what it takes for the media in a country like Uganda, under the wave of globalization and commercialization to provide citizens with information, advice and analysis to enable them to know and pursue their rights as well as providing them with a decent range of information, the relevance of content determines the extent to which they can participate meaningfully and access vital information of public opinion, make meaningful choices and be culturally competent.

Uganda and most African countries have adopted trade liberalisation policies which have freed the airwaves in the early 1990s (Chibita 2003:51). Radio (Mwesige, 2004) talk shows facilitate political competition through offering opportunities for government leaders, political groups, and civil society organizations to speak directly with and mobilize public support. The government articulates its agenda on the talk shows. At the same time, opposition politicians and civil society groups have an opportunity to challenge the government over the same issues, articulate alternative political agendas, and demand for accountability. At another level, talk radio has turned into a civic forum through which citizens acquire information about public affairs, attempt to exert influence upward on political leaders, question, challenge, and demand accountability from official power holders, engage in public discourse and debate on collective public problems and policy, or simply let off steam.

Broadcasting ranks top high as the most universal means of public communication, conveying information, entertainment, education, and persuasion, (Head, et al, 2001). Today the broadcasting industry has evolved into an influx of radio and television networks. In Uganda for instance the number of radio stations has grown from one in the early 1990s to more than 150 to date. Television stations have also increased from one in the same period to six to date. In the United States there are more than 12,000 radio stations, more than 3,500 TV stations, almost 11,000 cable systems and satellite-delivered programming (Head et al 2001). Frequency modulation has expanded the number of frequencies through which both radio and television broadcasts can be relayed. Television's VHF channels have also helped to improved visibility and picture quality.

The new developments in the media industry has increased the quality and variety of programmes from commercial, entertainment, educational, and infotainment formats. New developments in the broadcasting technology have made it possible to link media access to TV, radio, music, internet, services for information, shopping, games, banking and development services. There are a variety of media contents (e.g. podcasts, voices, texts, pictures) can be digitally retained, retransmitted and transported, enabling an interaction by the user, exactly at the moment that is convenient to the user, (Geleva Emilija, 1999). The new media technologies have influenced most local cultures through the increased access to alien cultures. The radio (Biagi 2001) has today become one of the admirable piece of work as it sells itself as a medium that reaches listeners while

they drive, work, shop and jog. Advertisers like radio's ability to reach targeted audiences.

The new innovations in the broadcasting industry have led to an increase in internationally syndicated programming on local radio and television in Africa. Most (80-90 per cent) of the music aired by F.M radio stations in Uganda and several African countries come from foreign productions led by U.S.A. This also applies to TV broadcasts where the bulk of the programmes are foreign content due to the cultural effects of globalisation in Africa. Media industry convergence is an emerging phenomenon in broadcasting sector on the continent. It influences the technology, media content, market shares of the revenues and public broadcasting in Africa. One of the impacts of technology convergence is the development of innovative broadcasting products and services being launched more rapidly in the market.

Media communications issues, culture, eco-tourism and environment in Africa

The media industry in Africa is instrumental in exerting its influence on the society. Rogers (1995) argues that awareness and knowledge of an innovation can be best disseminated by the mass media and that there are five stages of adoption process: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption of the decision. During awareness stage, an individual is exposed to a new innovation without prior knowledge of it. In the next stage (interest), one gets interested in the new idea and looks for more information on the issue. The eco-tourism industry can do no worse than adopt as its policy, the development of partnership with the media industry as its secret weapon for surviving global tourism competition. Likewise, the application of priming theory by the media would help the public to follow the political behaviour of the policy and decision-makers on the continent. Priming refers to the impact of news coverage on the weight assigned to specific issues in making political judgments.

The issues that are highlighted in the priming theory are: responsibility, political knowledge and media trust by the audience. Interpersonal communication can mean the ability to relate to people in written or verbal communication in the context of either both a one-on-one, face-to-face and a group contacts. This requires ability to comfortably deal with all kinds of people we meet in different settings. It is body language which is seen through our behaviour or actions such as: gestures, eye contacts, body movement, dressing, appearances or presentations. Interpersonal communication is crucial during listening, talking, counselling, dressing, and conflict resolution. The African Union should adopt new innovation communications strategy where the media plays a key role to advance eco-tourism industry-led innovation in public policies at all levels for poverty reduction on the continent.

Africa should exploit the new media technology to develop the concept and practice of "lead markets" where public authorities, facilitate industry-led innovation by creating conditions for a successful market uptake of focused innovative products, processes and

services for global competitiveness. Prime targets should focus on areas that respond to societal demand-driven areas such as local jobs, accommodation facilities, transport or health, peace/security and new eco-innovations. Media communications (McKnight, 2006) campaign must consider at least four key challenges: partnership, resources, leadership and duration. Communications have to be opportunistic about new events, messengers, and allies. Although the campaign use many tactics to deliver its story, mass media over time play a major role in reaching decision makers and other key audiences.

Some of the most serious challenges to be addressed in the development of African eco-tourism industry communications environment are: media support, developing media professional skills, ensuring public broadcasting programming that meets the audiences' priorities, cultures and languages, and promoting professional ethics among the media communicators. Media communication should be based on a multi-media approach particularly in implementing major campaigns, in working out campaigns and programmes; there should be a deliberate effort to understand the communication environment, including target groups, appropriate media platforms, messages and forms of interaction. The main measures of impacts should include: the amount of media exposure or media the campaign has gained for example from: television, radio, print, billboard, and internet.

The Uganda national environment management authority has been conducting public awareness campaigns on FM radio stations and a weekly interactive TV programme in the country. Media broadcasts can be effectively used to disseminate key eco-tourism media messages across Africa. Media research is crucial because it examines the specific communication medium, the user and use of medium, the effects of the medium, how the medium can be improved, content, and the communicator. Communication inputs and audience responses reflect on the following (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974) message design factors: production related factors, content related factors, media related factors, and audience-related factors. The latter may examine the application of the "uses and gratifications" theory which is based on the idea that (Stanley & Dennis, 2003) media don't do things to people; but people do things with media.

Media communications should be well planned and targeted for maximum audience exposure to the messages. Communicators, who wish (Curram & Gurevitch, 2000) to inform, persuade or simply hold the attention of their auditors must adapt more closely than in the past to what ordinary people find interesting, relevant and accessible. Berlo (1990) argues that there is a need to know the receiver's attitudes, level of knowledge, listening and comprehension abilities, social and cultural background to communicate more effectively. Public service agencies which commission media campaigns in support of their goals should know that the use of several media channels and multiple presentations in a variety of eye and ear-catching formats is recommended (Mody,

1991). Slade and Weitz observed (1991) that various media such as newspapers, television and radio should be used to promote environmental values and awareness.

The use of appropriate theory or model is crucial for any successful media campaigns aimed at creating, raising and sustaining public awareness for behaviour change. Coffman (2002) asserts that more theory development and theory integration for public will campaign are needed because part of the problem with the communication campaign is lack of awareness among the campaign practitioners, evaluators and their sponsors about what outcomes and methods are appropriate and available. Hubley (1980) contends that communication strategy decisions should involve surveys to determine communication systems in a community; audience familiarity with and exposure to different media; characteristics of target groups; effectiveness of different media; opinion leaders that can be engaged in the project.

Through priming theory (Stanley & Dennis, 2003), the media can create, raise, and sustain public awareness for sustainable tourism and “eco-guard” behaviour change. The Priming theory which in media is related to the Agenda Setting theory; is the process by which certain portions of media content are 'brought to the forefront' and other portions are relegated to the background for maximum effect. This process allows the media to exercise control over public opinion. Priming is most important when issues are new and information is scarce. By applying The Frame Theory the media can “frame” new innovations and ecotourism policies, international conventions and best practices, community projects and regional success stories as well as lessons learned for informed public debates and awareness education in Africa. Framing is a process of selective control over media content or public communication (Stanley & Dennis, 2003). Framing defines how a certain piece of media content or rhetoric is packaged to allow only the desirable interpretations at the expense of others.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni recently accused the local press of being irresponsible and irrational agents of saboteurs of Africa’s future. The Ugandan media had set the agenda which sparked off a fiery nationwide eco-debate against the current government plan to supplant the biggest Uganda’s natural forest (Mabira Forest) by a sugarcane plantation, a move which the president himself defended, as a struggle to industrialise the pre-industrial backward African state. Uganda, with a population of over 25 million inhabitants, now has 140 radio stations and 20 TV stations. In their efforts to inform, educate and entertain the public, the media industry in Uganda triggered off a nationwide and international public debates against the anticipated wanton destruction of about 8000 hectares of ecologically diverse Mabira natural forest which is also the host of Eco-Tourism Centre run by the National Forestry Agency (NFA) of Uganda.

The media according to the public sphere model are defined as central elements of a healthy public sphere-the “space” within which ideas, opinions, and views freely

circulate, Croteau and Hoynes (2001:14). Mwesige (2004) found that open-air talk shows provide more opportunities for citizen participation by allowing at least three minutes of talking time to an average of 15 people per show. Members of the public are also able to participate as equals in these debates, which also attract political elites. McQuail (2000) argues that according to this principle, truth triumphs over error in the end and leads to free market place of ideas; which seems to bless private ownership and the free enterprise system. Uganda like many other African countries adopted the free enterprise system and liberalized the airwaves in the early 1990s (Chibita 2003:51). According to Chibita in Nassanga (2003), under the wave of globalization and commercialization to provide citizens with information, advice and analysis to enable them to know and pursue their rights as well as providing them with a decent range of information, the relevance of content determines the extent to which they can participate meaningfully and access vital information of public opinion, make meaningful choices and be culturally enriched (competent).

The media imposes a range of effects which range from insignificant, medium to great or powerful effects on the audiences in the society. Media communications across cultures include: speaking, writing, editing, information gathering, dissemination and community participation in public campaigns. There are three main components to any communication: subject matter, medium of delivery, and cultural considerations. They are hard to define even for our own culture because we take them in with our mother's language. Global communication, transportation, and changes in living styles have begun to blur many of the surface distinctions between different cultures. There are common denominators in every cross-cultural communications which require cultural competence by tourists and their hosts.

Cultural competence refers to the ability to work effectively with individuals from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, or in settings where several cultures coexist. It includes the ability to understand the language, culture, and behaviours of other individuals and groups, and to make appropriate recommendations. Cultural competence exists on a continuum from incompetence to proficiency. Cultural sensitivity is a necessary component of cultural competence. Effective communication between providers and clients may be even more challenging when linguistic barriers exist. Cultural competence is a developmental process that requires a long-term commitment. It is not a specific end product that occurs after a two-hour workshop, but it is an active process of learning and practicing over time. People who work among different ethnic and cultures may become culturally competent by developing awareness, acquiring knowledge, and maintaining cross-cultural skills.

Developing cultural awareness involve: admitting personal biases, stereotypes, and prejudices; becoming aware of cultural norms, attitudes, and beliefs; valuing diversity ;willingness to extend oneself psychologically and physically to the client population; recognizing comfort level in different situations; acquiring knowledge; knowing how

your culture is viewed by others ;attending classes, workshops, and seminars about other cultures; reading about other cultures; watching movies and documentaries about other cultures ;attending cultural events and festivals ;sharing knowledge and experiences with others; visiting other countries -making friends with people of different cultures; establishing professional and working relationships with people of different cultures; learning another language; learning verbal and nonverbal cues of other cultures; becoming more comfortable in cross-cultural situations; assessing what works and what does not; assessing how the beliefs and behaviours of the cultural group affect the client or family; learning to negotiate between the person's beliefs and practices and the culture of your profession; being more flexible ;attending continuing education seminars and workshops; learning to develop culturally relevant and appropriate programs, materials, and interventions; learning to evaluate culturally relevant and appropriate programs, materials, and interventions; ongoing evaluation of personal feelings and reactions ;overcoming fears, personal biases, stereotypes, and prejudices.

In order to achieve better communication skills, competitive tourism industry; the tour operators are encouraged to develop and implement a strategy to: recruit, retain, and promote qualified, diverse, and culturally competent administrative staff, clinical, and support staff; promoting and supporting the necessary attitudes, behaviours, knowledge, and skills for staff to work respectfully and effectively with clients and each other in a culturally diverse work environment; developing a comprehensive strategy to address culturally and linguistically appropriate services, including strategic goals, plans, policies, and procedures; hiring and training interpreters and bilingual staff; providing a bilingual staff or free interpretation services to clients with limited English skills; translating and making available sign and commonly used educational materials in different languages; developing structures and procedures to address cross-cultural ethical and legal conflicts, complaints, or grievances by patients and staff; preparing and distributing an annual progress report documenting the organizations' progress in implementing these standards, including information on programs, staffing, and resources. While cultural competence has increased significantly, there is still much to be done on the personal, organizational, and societal levels.

Education and training to enhance the provision of culturally effective health care must be integrated into lifelong learning. As intercultural contact increases, norms from one culture may appear strange or shocking to people from another culture, but the key to improving cross-cultural dialogue is to develop what is known as cultural competence or the ability to recognize cultural differences, rather than judging another culture by the norms of your own. Cultural competence allows educators and communicators to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. Becoming culturally competent means not only learning about other cultures, but also learning which of our own traits and don't have to travel to find different cultures.

All environmental educators and communicators should be culturally competent to reach diverse audiences both at home and abroad. People who work in foreign lands should learn the cultures of their hosts. There are many major world cultures with common patterns of behaviour including common thought, communication styles, actions, customs, arts, beliefs, and values that are all framed by a worldview. Environmental communicators must be aware of how culture, along with gender and other factors, influences how people interpret our messages. Culturally sensitive and appropriate messages are very effective.

Effective communication leads to greater homophily between the communicators. Nonverbal communication methods vary among cultures as such understanding cultural components of nonverbal communication including body language, gestures, and concepts of space and time, are essential to effective cross-cultural communication. The media is the major source of information followed by schools. Effective environmental communicators should consider culture at the first stage of the audience research, followed by pre-testing messages and materials as the message may be interpreted differently across-cultures.

The media has drawn the attention of the public on sensitive ecological issues and trends. Uganda media recently locked-horns with the government when it gave extensive coverage on the impending government plan to replace the country's legally gazetted natural forest (Mabira forest) with a sugarcane plantation. The streets of Kampala capital city soon overflowed with eco-demonstrators with fatal consequences when the police force opened fire on the protesting crowds. Media communications raised awareness and political impact on public opinion prompted a fresh political rethinking by the government. It is well known that human-induced climate change and the loss of biodiversity are the key global environmental issues today.

The media should intensify campaigns to raise awareness and shift public opinion. Conservation communicators must make the issues relevant for a highly confused public. In UK (EU, 2000), government targets concerning the quality of protected areas are now embedded in policy. Recent proposals for major infrastructure projects which were expected to impinge on protected sites like the Hastings Bypasses and the Dibden Bay port development were rejected despite a strong economic argument aggressively made in their support. Sustainable tourism plays a pivotal role in the conservation of natural and cultural heritage. It caters for the welfare of the local and indigenous communities in its development and operation, contributing to their well-being; interprets the natural and cultural heritage of the destination to visitors; and lends itself better to independent travellers, as well as to organized tours for small size groups.

Developing public communications campaigns for sustainable tourism in Africa is the bedrock for achieving sustainable development for poverty reduction in the African Union. One of the main reasons is that sustainable tourism is the basis for the attainment

of sustainable peace on the continent. Tourism in Africa is synonymous with environment and natural resources. Indiscriminate destruction of our natural resources is a sure recipe for the current mass poverty in Africa. It is a living reality which deserves global approach. Awareness campaigns are critical for effective policy, constitutional and legal implementation of sustainable tourism principles, plan, goals and projects in Africa and globally.

Effective media communications strategies are crucial for policy and decision makers themselves who are often the drivers of natural resources destructions on the continent. Public awareness communications campaigns provide vital information and knowledge for community empowerment for active participation in eco-tourism project planning and management in Africa. An effective media campaign fosters national, regional and international collaboration among the eco-tourism development partners: the private sector investors, the civil society, the policy makers, and the local communities in the industry.

Media practitioners, project monitors and evaluators benefit from the awareness campaigns for better insights for improved campaigns strategies. The campaigns help to speed up the implementation of the legal and policy instruments. They provide the energy for the vital attitudinal and behaviour change as they accord respect and transparency to the whole campaign process. Media campaigns are human rights issues which should be enshrined in the legal provisions for access to public information. Media campaigns, as a strategy, are crucial for objective verification and analyses of key eco-tourism promotional and investment issues on the continent of Africa. Sustainable tourism awareness campaigns could be rapidly created, raised and sustained throughout Africa, Americas, Australia, Europe, Asia and globally.

Many media practitioners and professionals agree that media campaigns would result in effective eco-tourism policy and project implementation in Africa. Public service (Mody, 1991) agencies which commission media campaigns in support of their goals should know that the use of several media channels and multiple presentations in a variety of eye and ear-catching formats is recommended. Media campaigns should be guided by informed ethical, theoretical and sustainable tourism factors. The campaigns should be systematic from inputs to outputs. The process should be evaluated. Public communications (Day, 2000) campaigns are varied, multifaceted, highly planned, and strategically assembled media symphonies designed to increase awareness, inform, or change behaviour in the target audiences. The goal of environmental communications campaigns is to instil in learners the knowledge about the environment, positive attitudes toward the environment, and competency in communities in environment and natural resources management skills and gender-equity empowerment.

Communications (Coffman.2002) campaign models act as road-maps as they guide the campaign managers how to proceed. The measures of effect that come about in the

target populations or communities as a result of the campaign include: knowledge and awareness, saliency, attitudes, norms, self-efficacy, behaviour intentions, behaviour, skills, environmental constraints, media frames, policy change and impacts. Media research examines the medium, user and use of medium, effects of the medium, how the medium can be improved, content, and the communicator as many media scholars have argued. Communication (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974) inputs and audience responses reflect on the following message design factors: production related factors, content related factors, media related factors, and audience-related factors.

The media can also apply the “uses and gratifications” theory, the idea that (Stanley & Dennis, 2003) media don’t do things to people; but people do things with media. Communicators, who wish (Curram & Gurevitch, 2000) to inform, persuade or simply hold the attention of their auditors must adapt more closely than in the past to what ordinary people find interesting, relevant and accessible. We need (Berlo, 1990) to know the receiver’s attitudes, level of knowledge, listening and comprehension abilities, social and cultural background to communicate more effectively. Public service (Mody, 1991) agencies which commission media campaigns in support of their goals should know that the use of several media channels and multiple presentations in a variety of eye and ear-catching formats is recommended.

Multi-media channels like: newspapers, television and radio are vital for promoting environmental values and awareness in Uganda with a focus on community participation in creating awareness among individuals. There is (Coffman, 2002) a need for more theory development and theory integration, particularly for public will campaign because part of the problem with the communication campaign is lack of awareness among the campaign practitioners, evaluators, and sponsors about what outcomes and methods are appropriate and available. Media communication strategy decisions (Hubley, 1980) should involve surveys to determine communication systems in community; familiarity with and exposure to different media; characteristics of target groups; effectiveness of different media; opinion leaders that can be used in the programme. Through priming theory (Stanley & Dennis, 2003), the media can raise awareness about this new gender based convention. Priming theory in media is related to the agenda setting theory.

Priming is the processes by which certain portions of media content are “brought to the forefront” while other portions are relegated to the background. This allows the media to exercise control over public opinion. Priming is most effective when issues are new and information is scarce. The media should focus on practical community and gender needs for ecotourism policy. The media can “frame” some of the most important ecotourism issues in Africa for public debates and awareness education. Framing is (ibid, 2003) a process of selective control over media content or public communication. Framing defines how a certain piece of media content or rhetoric is packaged to expose only the desirable frames at the expense of others. The first and foremost main (Ethel,

2002) ingredients of successful public communication campaigns that are designed to change behaviour is increasing knowledge and awareness as the starting point.

Communications campaigns (Okaka.W,2002) are one of the policy areas for non-formal environmental education (EE) in Uganda where the key programme areas identified include: networking and co-ordination, development of EE training materials, development of environmental resource and information centres, public awareness media campaigns, research, development of training manuals, strengthening the role of indigenous knowledge and practice in EE and integrating gender issues into environmental policy planning, and implementation. Most “eco-suicidal” decisions made in Uganda and the rest of Africa are motivated by official corruption involving the state actors under the pretext of foreign investments.

Corruption is a formidable poverty driver which shows no signs of abetting in most African Union states. Uganda government defines corruption as (MoEI, 2000) the use of public office for private gain. This covers: embezzlement, nepotism, favoritism, self-dealing, insider trading, influence peddling, or the use of public office or assets for political advantage. Official surveys regularly conducted in the country by the national “Ombudsman” show that most Ugandans believe that state corruption by the government is cancerous. Uganda government says it hopes to: strengthen the law enforcement capacity for investigation, prosecution and judgments, procurement system; public sector reform; public financial accountability; coordination of anti-corruption agencies; codes of conduct, corruption laws, and “allow” the civil society to monitor official corruption in the country. It is only an informed public that can contribute to the reduction of state corruption in Africa. Media campaigners can frame some of the key eco-tourism issues in Africa for public awareness education.

Conclusion

The media can spur the current prospects for the African countries to actively collaborate in a wide range of eco-tourism enhancement activities which include: joint product or service development, research, human resource development and management, exchange of tourism experts and tourism information within the existing economic and trading regional blocks like: the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Preferential Trade Area (PTA), Southern African Development Area Coordination Conference (SADACC), East Africa Community (EAC), Economic Community for the Organisation of West African Countries (ECOWAS), and the African Union (AU). There is a huge virgin market for Africa's eco-tourism investment which should be developed and strengthened. Sustainable tourism cannot survive without a working environment management system (EMS) and regular environment impact assessment.

Legislations and codes should be developed to ensure balanced development of tourism in African tourist destinations to facilitate access to information about African tourism

and ecological conservation. A case in point is Kenya where tourism is a major employer accounting for almost 11% of the total national labour force there. The Kenyan eco-tourism society aims to market eco-tourism as a tool for the conservation of the natural environment for sustainable community livelihoods in the protected areas. It plans to develop eco-management standards for better tourism and hopes to publish eco-tourism regulations and codes of conduct as well as to develop public awareness campaign strategy to mitigate potential negative ecological, cultural, social and economic impact of tourism in the country. Sustainable tourism will materialise in Africa if we integrate tourism into the overall policy for sustainable development, development of sustainable tourism, and management of tourism.

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