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THE DEVCOM LOS BAÑOS STYLE OF COMMUNICATION MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyzed selected CDC major extension projects over the years, with materials development and production as major component. Based on experiences on these projects, some essentials of the DevCom Los Baños Style of communication materials development have been identified such as participation; pretesting; process-orientation; needs- and evidence-based content; cost-effectiveness; capability-building; and sustainability. These essentials reflect movements from top-down processes of materials development to more participatory approaches.

INTRODUCTION

The contributions of communication and media in development are well recognized. As early as the 1960s, Schramm (1964) identified communication tasks vis-à-vis national development such as informing, decision-making, and teaching, that mass media can do, directly or in part. Beltran (1967) also asserted that “development hinges on communication.” More recently, Bessette (2004) stated that the last 50 years have provided evidence showing the importance of communication in development.

Although the role of communication in development is well recognized, approaches and strategies differed. According to Bessette (2004), two trends co-exist, rooted in changes in development and communication paradigms: one that has a bias

towards large-scale action and mass media; and another that champions small-scale projects and small media. Traditionally, communication, including the development and production of communication media, is vertical/top-down. In these approaches, the communication process is seen primarily as the sending of messages from source to receiver. However, this top-down approach has been considered as limited, with those against it arguing that active involvement in the communication process is more facilitative of development (Servaes, 2007). With this, participatory or bottom-up approaches, which recognize “cultural identity of local communities and of democratization and participation at all levels” (Servaes, 2007, p.488), have been put forward. Servaes (2007) further maintains that these participatory approaches use the community as the starting point and involve the community in planning and production of content.

The College of Development Communication, from its early years as the Department of Development Communication under the College of Agriculture, has long been engaged in extension practice and education through the art and science of communication. Its many involvements over the years have brought to the fore experiences that can be crystallized into lessons worth sharing not only with fellow development communication practitioners but also and more importantly with everyone else who is involved in reaching out to the various stakeholders of the development process.

As early as the 1950s, the Los Baños School of development communication or DevCom Los Baños Style has pioneered participatory development communication research and projects, with its early experiments in community media, particularly in rural development journalism and community broadcasting (Manyozo, 2006). Early on, the DevCom Los Baños Style has emphasized community consultation; participation as a prerequisite to implementation; and bottom-up programming (Manyozo, 2006).

This paper chronicles CDC’s major extension projects engaged in over the years by its faculty, REPS, and administrative personnel, with materials development and production as major component. In the process, it traces the change in the manner communication scholars and practitioners have viewed materials development and production – from the “large-volume approach” mostly dealing with production of materials that could cater to the “faceless mass” of recipients to the more focused approach of developing messages and materials for a specific segment of the population with pre-identified information needs. Finally, the paper offers the essentials of materials development and production using the devcom way.

DISCUSSION

CDC’s Extension Programs and Projects Over the Years

Core Programs:

Radyo DZLB and Dito sa Laguna

Radyo DZLB is the oldest educational and development-oriented radio station in the Philippines. Started in 1964, the station aims to provide leadership in using development broadcasting in complementing a community’s efforts to improve the people’s lives and livelihood through relevant information dissemination. By serving as a training center for educational and development broadcasting, it has helped countless extension personnel from local and foreign institutions and organizations and other community broadcasters hone their skills in using radio as a medium for airing educational, informational, and entertainment programs that have uplifted the lives of its listeners.

Radyo DZLB has tested the effective use of radio for technology transfer by introducing various approaches to programming, such as: a) school-on-the-air; b) instructional broadcast series; c) radio forum; and d) radio drama. The planning and production

of these programs included participation of the different stakeholders — listeners, target communities, agency partners, and the academe. Before airing, Radyo DZLB has made it a point to conduct a series of trainings and workshops with the partners on content development, managing and handling radio programs, and materials development. As such, DZLB's primary partners have been formally and directly involved in the station's programming while its secondary partners have provided the station with broadcast materials on relevant concerns. Among these are food and agriculture, biotechnology, environment, women, education, health, nutrition, human rights, peace, climate change adaptation, and natural resource management.

In return, Radyo DZLB provides its partner organizations and agencies with the communication support they need. Partners benefit from the advantages offered by radio as a communication medium.

Radyo DZLB also sought the active participation of students from UPLB to further serve the students of the university by opening its FM platform via LBFM: "Local, Loud and Proud." This helped pave the way for a new breed of radio programming broadcast from within the campus. FM also helped in furthering the community-oriented goals of DZLB. Bringing together volunteer DJs from all the different colleges in the form of the UPLB Jocks, LBFM commits itself to the goal of serving the University and its immediate community through its primary tool-- music.

During the 1998 National Elections, Radyo DZLB experimented on providing its listeners with simultaneous radio and TV coverage as it partnered with Community Cable Vision Corporation. The station's three-day broadcasts were also aired on television through CCVC. This broadcast innovation is now popularly called "Tele-Radyo." Radyo DZLB envisions the development of yet another model of community communication that integrates the use of radio, cable, and the internet.

This Tele-Radyo concept gave birth to "*Dito sa Laguna*" (DSL), a 30-minute cable TV talk program that airs development-oriented topics. DSL invites experts from the academe and partner organizations to serve as resource persons on current development-oriented issues. The weekly program encourages viewers to participate via mobile communications and the social media. Since its maiden telecast in March 2014 to August 2015, DSL has aired 68 episodes. The shift to Tele-Radyo was as much an innovation as it was a strategic move while Radyo DZLB is rehabilitating its transmitter and antenna tower.

Radyo DZLB envisions itself serving as a national training center for the television, radio, and internet, or Tele-RadyoNet system catering to SCUs, LGUs, and NGO sectors. Further, through Radyo DZLB, UPLB will reassume leadership in cutting-edge community broadcasting research and development in the ASEAN by tapping new, appropriate, and community-centered media and technologies.

Los Baños Times

The history of *Los Baños Times* has spanned 43 years. It traces its roots to *Sandiwa*, an eight-page tabloid-sized fortnightly community newspaper, published by the then Department of Agricultural Communication (DAC) in January 1972 (Dy, 1983; Librero, 2008; Torres, 1980). *Sandiwa* was coined from the Tagalog words "*isang diwa* or one soul" (Librero, 2008,p.11). It temporarily ceased publication in two instances: 1) when Martial Law was proclaimed on September 21, 1972, but publication resumed a year after; and 2) when Program Genesis, a project of the then Department of Public Information in 1974, which aimed to establish a network of community newspapers, was only able to publish two issues in September 1975; DDC eventually resumed the management and production of *Sandiwa* in 1976 (Torres, 1980).

Circa 1981, *Sandiwa* ceased publication. A new community newspaper, called *Los Baños Times*, was published in 1983,

with *Sandiwa* as its model. Under the auspices of DDC, students enrolled in DEVC 164 (Management and Production of a Community Newspaper), which was renumbered as DEVC 123 in 1991 and published *Los Baños Times* every second semester of the academic year (Gruta, 2012). Three decades after, *Los Baños Times* remains as a community newspaper managed and produced every second semester of the academic year by students enrolled in DEVC 123 (1991-2015) and in DEVC 136 (Multi-media Materials Production and Management), now under the Department of Development Journalism (DDJ). *Los Baños Times* has evolved through the years to cater to the needs and interests of its readers. The first magazine supplement *In Depth* came out in 2006. In 2010, the *Los Baños Times* officially started its online edition (www.lbtimes.ph) to cater to a wider audience. From here, its social media presence was established with its Facebook (www.facebook.com/LbTimes) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/LB_Times) accounts.

In 2014, DDJ embarked on an action research on engaging selected local government agencies, barangays, civil society organizations, and schools as collaborators in the planning, production, and management of *Los Baños Times*. Nineteen collaborators—10 from local government agencies; 3 from barangays; 5 from civil society organizations; and 1 from a school -- comprised the list of collaborators. As part of this, the *Los Baños Times Libre* edition, an eight-page tabloid-sized monthly paper, was published last March 2014. *Los Baños Times* is envisioned to be a platform of dialogue in the community, giving voice to various sectors, particularly those who are underrepresented, such as the small-scale farmers and fisherfolk, women, children, the elderly, indigenous people, and people with disabilities. It focuses on development issues, especially in food security and nutrition, natural resources and environment, education, health and well-being, entrepreneurship, and culture.

As a community media, *Los Baños Times Libre* edition operates as one of the elements of the communication system in the Los Baños community. In this regard, an understanding of

communication roles, needs, and resources available in the community is necessary in the identification and creation of a community media (Opubor, 1999). As such, collaborators participated in a focus group discussion to map the Los Baños community communication system—actors/roles, modes and channels, topics/messages, needs, resources, and problems/issues. In this way, *Los Baños Times*' niche in the community communication system is determined based on the perspective of stakeholders and not solely dictated by the community media program of DDJ and/or CDC, nor by the LGU.

Moreover, the collaborators underwent a one-day training on news writing, feature writing, and photojournalism to expose them to the news production process and to enable them to write their own stories. These trainings would not only enable the collaborators to contribute stories to *Los Baños Times*, but they would also enhance the capacities of the collaborators in their line of work.

Los Baños Times, together with its forerunner *Sandiwa*, has been a provider of local development news to the Province of Laguna, specifically to the town of *Los Baños*, since 1972. Prior to the action research, community members were primarily receivers of information. With the action research, community members began getting involved in writing their own stories. Further, *Los Baños Times* has become a platform for new sources of information, particularly from underrepresented groups, who are the primary sectors that the paper aims to serve.

Adopt-a-School

For almost three years now, the Department of Educational Communication (DEC) has been supporting one of its adopted schools – Bernaldo N. Calara Elementary School (BNCES) in Anos, Los Baños, Laguna --through the Learning Support package under the Adopt-A-School program of the Department of Education (DepEd). This is part of the bigger picture made possible by Republic Act 8525 or the Adopt-A-School Act enacted

in 1988. RA 8525 aims to make basic education accessible to every Filipino child by strengthening partnerships between and among the business sector, foundations, and non-government organizations that are willing to assist government schools (elementary, secondary, or tertiary) preferably located in the poorest provinces or municipalities.

Over the years, the partnership with BNCES has allowed for the: (1) provision of venue for BSDC students to apply theories, concepts, and principles taught and learned in classroom; (2) sharing of expertise and resources to help improve the quality of instruction of the adopted school; (3) promotion of social consciousness and active involvement in the community service among faculty, staff, and students; (4) conduct of monitoring and evaluation activities to keep track of its progress and assess its effects during project conclusion; and (5) promotion and keeping of harmonious relationship between CDC and the adopted school.

DEC has donated a number of educational materials produced by the students and faculty, which include the following:

- **Big Books** – enlarged versions (11" x 14") of story books containing large print texts and illustrations that are highly visible to learners (Hall and O'Connor, 2006);
- **E-modules** – electronic learning modules that provide lessons about the topic in a logical and sequential order with the use of navigation buttons; and
- **Educational board games** – games with educational value which involve "pieces" that are placed or marked in a board and "mechanics" that guide the players.

Production of the above learning materials goes through a process, starting with a training needs analysis (TNA) of intended learners/users. TNAs are conducted using interview guides, focus group discussions, or surveys. The teachers are the primary sources of data for the learners' characteristics and skills. On the other hand, the students themselves are asked about their learning preferences.

After the TNA, instructional designers determine the goals and objectives of the production of a learning material. The rationale for the project, treatment, objectives (RTO) and the topic outline are also written in consultation with the teachers and students and based on the results of the TNA. Writing follows approval of the RTO and topic outline, which hone students' skills in turning out narrative scripts with audio and visual components, e-modules, and storyboards. Subject matter specialists (SMS) and/or the teachers themselves are asked to review the materials, especially if these are on topics of their expertise (i.e., English, Math, Science). Results of the pretesting are used to improve the final version of the materials.

With Adopt-a-School, DEC demonstrates a more inclusive and participatory communication materials production process. DEC proposed specific activities such as: (1) deployment of students under the supervision of faculty to the adopted school for conduct of relevant learning activities as outputs in class; (2) donation of relevant learning materials; (3) conduct of service training for teachers based on training needs assessment; (4) conduct of other relevant and appropriate activities designed to help improve the teaching-learning environment of the adopted school and within the expertise of DEC; and (5) monitoring and evaluation activities. All these activities, however, had only been implemented when the partner school indicated its need and their willingness to coordinate, participate, and lend support. DEC's role was to facilitate these activities.

The partner school equally participates in deciding what materials and/or activities to produce and/or conduct. The limitations and concerns on the part of the stakeholders were lack of adequate facilities and learning equipment, hence DEC always considered the stakeholders' readiness or preparedness in using and incorporating each kind of material in the teaching-learning process.

Non-core Programs:

Health Communication Materials

CDC has collaborated with the Department of Health on a number of communication materials development projects, most notable of which were the revision of the Philippine Health Advisories and the development of the Integrated Information Kit for Midwives. Both publications are practical publications intended for nationwide distribution to specific stakeholders, the former for personnel in the allied medical professions and the latter for rural health midwives.

The Philippine Health Advisories lists the particulars of various infectious diseases, non-communicable illnesses, and weather- and season-related ailments endemic to the country. In 2011, the Department of Health's National Center for Health Promotion and CDC-UPLB collaborated to revise and update the publication to include new health advisories for the country. The existing 77 advisories were updated based on the latest information gathered from the World Health Organization, Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other medical institutions and organizations. An additional 40 new advisories were written. These new advisories include recent health issues and concerns (e.g., AH1N1, SARS, COPD, Sexually Transmitted Diseases) and DOH programs (e.g., Infant and Young Child Feeding, Reproductive Health, and Public Health Emergencies).

The Midwives' Kit, on the other hand, called for the conduct of a technical review of historical documents used in the development of previous information kits, including those from other countries. Prior to revision, CDC put together the most recent information useful to midwives on prenatal care, intrapartum and postpartum care, breastfeeding, child care, and non-pregnant stages.

Central to the development of these two publications was the rigorous process of development which included research,

consultations with experts, consultative workshops and writeshops with relevant stakeholders, pretesting with prospective users, and revisions incorporating relevant comments generated during the process. It took CDC more than a year to finish PHA and more than three years to finalize the Midwives' Kit. The process was longer for the Midwives' Kit because it will be produced in five languages (English, Filipino, Bicolano, Cebuano, and Ilonggo). Hence, the consultative workshops and pretests were done for each of the five languages.

Financial Literacy on Microinsurance

CDC was exceptionally gratified to have contributed to the framing of one of the three milestone documents on appropriate risk protection for the poor in the country. The CDC Team developed in 2011 *A Roadmap to Financial Literacy on Microinsurance*, the other two documents being the *National Strategy on Microinsurance* and *Regulatory Framework on Microinsurance*.

The materials development process was a key component of the total CDC engagement, which called for the development of a communication strategy to promote financial literacy on microinsurance. The ACSM (Advocacy, Communication, Social Mobilization) approach became the cornerstone of the FinLit (Financial Literacy) communication strategy. Advocacy calls for persuading people, mostly at the macro level, to bring about a voluntary change in judgment so that they will support microinsurance. A Speakers' Bureau was formed to develop a corps of advocates per region who will champion microinsurance nationwide. Communication revolves around delivering tailor-fitted messages to the right stakeholder groups through appropriate channels and strategies, involving both mass and interpersonal channels bolstered by ICTs (information and communication technologies). Social mobilization entails engaging people in action and eliciting widescale participation. To broaden the base of microinsurance, it is necessary to multiply the number of supporters fast.

Development of communication materials was undertaken in a participatory manner involving representatives from various stakeholder groups. These groups include those at the macro level (legislators, government regulatory agencies, national agencies, and local government units), meso level (insurance providers, intermediaries, support institutions, and donors and other development partners), and micro level (existing and potential clients/consumers – jeepney drivers, market vendors, construction workers, etc.).

Altogether, five major communication support materials were developed: 1) 10 brochures for each of the 10 stakeholders of microinsurance; 2) a flipchart for advocacy sessions involving small groups; 3) a poster for mass distribution; 4) PowerPoint presentations for the training of Speakers' Bureau members; and the Trainer's Manual for Microinsurance Advocates.

The series of consultations and pretests with the members of the multi-sectoral Technical Working Group (TWG) was crucial to the development and improvement of all communication materials. The TWG was composed of different stakeholders – Asian Development Bank, GIZ, government agencies, insurance institutions, representatives from LGUs and other civil society organizations.

The TWG members were involved from framing of messages to content development with accompanying visuals to layout to pretesting for attractiveness, comprehensibility, accuracy, and acceptability. Feedback from technical experts was very crucial in ensuring content accuracy and understandability, especially on microinsurance and risk protection. There are nuances in the technical language of microinsurance and financial literacy that only technical experts will be able to explain clearly so content writers, in turn, will be able to draft messages more effectively. The whole process took four rounds of intensive consultations with the TWG.

The capability building component was a crucial aspect of the process of materials development in this particular undertaking. The prospective users were trained on the use of the flipchart, with corresponding proper presentation skills in front of a small audience. They were also briefed on the contents, usefulness, and proper use of each communication material to emphasize complementation or achieving maximum effectiveness of each one as a stand-alone medium or in combination with other materials.

Anti-discrimination Campaign

Widespread discrimination has been detrimental to the overall way of life of indigenous peoples (IPs). It has driven them to poverty, stripped them of power, and excluded them from basic services.

It was against this backdrop that CDC and *Tanggapang Panligal para sa Katutubong Pilipino* (PANLIPI) joined forces to implement a project that would analyze these issues and, in turn, implement an integrated communication strategy that would address discrimination against IPs. The project was piloted in Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro, which is home to the Mangyan indigenous community.

CDC and PANLIPI collaborated on a number of initiatives to enhance the capacities of IPs in the Philippines. The notable materials development activities were: 1) development of facilitators' guidebook for trainers; and 2) conduct of research forum and development of an integrated communication strategy on non-discrimination of IPs.

All these programs were executed using the participatory development communication (PDC) approach. Different stakeholders of the programs provided inputs in the development of the communication research, materials, and campaign. Participation from the different stakeholders was seen from the start of the project until the final implementation.

Since the projects with PANLIPI dealt with IPs, seeking a free and prior informed consent was initiated to get approval from the communities. Proper orientation and series of consultations were held to lay down activities and solicit participation from these groups. CDC implemented a series of capacity-building activities to train PANLIPI staff and IPs on the basics of formative research and communication planning.

Pretesting the communication materials with IP communities proved to be a most rewarding experience in terms of reinforcing the value of the activity. A poster depicting teachers with open arms welcoming Mangyan pupils to school was interpreted in exactly the opposite manner. Mangyans felt that the wide-open arms signified erecting a barrier that would prevent people from getting into the school premises.

The members of the IP community also provided inputs by participating in storytelling exercises (sharing their stories), participatory research (conducting interviews), as well as training on and development of IEC materials (conceptualization and designing materials). The IPs also participated in pretesting the materials and in the final presentation and evaluation.

Elements of Devcom Los Baños Style of Communication Materials Development

Experiences in the development and production of communication materials at the College of Development Communication bring to the fore the following elements: participation; pretesting; process-orientation; needs- and evidence-based content; cost-effectiveness; capability-building; and sustainability.

Partnership with LGUs

In the community-based projects outlined above, such as Radyo DZLB, *Los Baños Times*, Adopt-a-School, and PANLIPI project, groundworking was critical prior to the process leading to

materials development. Groundworking establishes the “buy-in” of the local government units, local government agencies, schools, barangays, and civil society organizations. The Local Chief Executive/agency head/school officials/barangay captains/association head’s “buy-in” was especially important. The groundworking activities also helped identify the members of the community who could be part of the process.

Participation

In the development of communication materials, stakeholders were involved in key stages of the process. First, in the planning stage, stakeholders had the upperhand in setting the design and content of the communication materials. For instance, program planning in Radyo DZLB included participation of the different stakeholders — listeners, target communities, agency partners, and the academe. In the Adopt-a-School program, the rationale for the project, treatment, objectives (RTO) and the topic outline were written in consultation with the teachers and students. Similarly, consultative meetings provided opportunities for stakeholders to identify the parts of the existing Philippine Health Advisories (PHA) that need to be enhanced; to determine the content and design of the Integrated Health Information Kit for Midwives; and to develop the Advocacy, Communication, Social Mobilization (ACSM) plan and key messages. Likewise, editorial meetings enabled *Los Baños Times* collaborators to input in the list of stories to be included in an issue of the community newspapers. Similarly, in the project with PANLIPI, IPs provided inputs by participating in storytelling exercises (sharing their stories), participatory research (conducting interviews), and conceptualization and design of IEC materials.

Second, in the execution of plans and designs, stakeholders also periodically reviewed the communication materials to ensure that their initial inputs were correctly incorporated and interpreted and to gather more feedback from them. For instance, a draft of the Integrated Health Information Kit for Midwives was presented for several rounds of substantive and

language review among stakeholders, mostly Health Education and Promotion Officers (HEPOs) and Rural Health Midwives (RHMs) from DOH's regional offices and the local government units (provincial, city, and municipal) nationwide. The financial literacy for microinsurance Technical Working Group-- composed of different stakeholders from ADB, GIZ, government agencies, insurance institutions, LGU representatives, and other civil society organizations— progressively reviewed drafts of communication materials such as manual, brochures, flipchart, posters, and powerpoint presentation.

Third, before the communication materials are produced, stakeholders input in the pretesting of the final prototype (See section below on pretesting).

Fourth, even in the production stage, stakeholders participate. In Radyo DZLB, communities and agency partners were involved in the production of various programs such as: a) school-on-the-air; b) instructional broadcast series; c) radio forum; and d) radio drama. Likewise, in the production of *Los Baños Times*, collaborators were involved not only in planning the content of each issue of the community newspaper but also as reporters or writers. In this sense, *Los Baños Times* attempts to tell the stories in the community from the perspective of its members, not from the point of view of outsiders. Rodriguez (2001) explains that producing community media content provides opportunity “to create one’s own images of self and environment; it implies being able to recodify one’s own identity with the signs and codes that one chooses, thereby disrupting the traditional acceptance of those imposed by outside sources” (p.763).

Participation in key stages of the production of communication materials enabled stakeholders to have an active role in the design and content, in the execution, and final prototype. In this way, the communication materials would more likely address the communication needs and preferences of the intended users. Most importantly, stakeholders, including intended users, would

have a sense of ownership of the communication materials, and from thereon, champions of the development theme espoused by the communication materials may emerge.

Pretesting

There have been numerous instances in the past when communication materials have been pulled out because of unfavorable reactions from the stakeholders and the general public. Pretesting--the “systematic field testing of communication materials before they are produced or printed” (Haaland, 1984)-- is important because it leads to better communication materials as feedback from the intended users and other stakeholders is considered before they are finalized. Pretesting also surfaces unintended messages communicated in a material, redounding to cost-effectiveness as the effectiveness of the material is ensured and, at the same time, waste of resources is averted (Haaland, 1984). At the end of the day, quality costs less.

Pretesting is a necessary step to review the content or technical correctness of the material. Pretesting also assesses the material in terms of attractiveness, comprehensibility, acceptability, self-involvement, and persuasiveness. It also includes comments and suggestions on the design, layout, and other visual elements such as color, illustration, and navigability (particularly for the e-modules). This was usually done with a representative group or sample of the intended users.

As such, pretesting is strongly advocated in the devcom Los Baños style of communication materials development and production. In all of the abovementioned cases--the learning materials; integrated health information kit for midwives; Philippine Health Advisories; manual, brochures, posters, and flipchart for the financial literacy on microinsurance; and anti-discrimination materials -- the communication materials were pretested among stakeholders, particularly intended users and subject matter specialists. In the pretesting, intended users had

a chance to use the communication materials and share their thoughts about them. Results of the pretesting were used in revising the communication materials before the final prototypes were produced.

Process-orientation

Experiences in the development and production of communication materials, Los Baños style, underscore a systematic process, starting with communication needs and opportunities analysis, followed by planning and design, production, and monitoring and evaluation. CDC core programs, such as *Los Baños Times* and Adopt-a-School, operate within this framework. Engagements with GOs, NGOs, and other agencies typically do not incorporate M&E as this component is left for the GO and NGOs to carry out.

A process-oriented approach means that communication materials are systematically produced, not simply based on the preferences of the funding agency nor the say-so of project consultants. Further, communication materials are developed based on evidence from needs analysis conducted both through technical reviews and consultations with stakeholders. All of the cases mentioned demonstrated how needs analyses have been incorporated in the production of communication materials.

Sustainability

Sustainability of projects, including devcom projects, remains a challenge in development practice. In the cases outlined above, attempts at ensuring sustainability were mainly through capability-building. Radyo DZLB conducted series of trainings and workshops with the partners. Moving forward, Radyo DZLB envisions to be a national training center for the television, radio, and internet, or TeleRadyoNet system catering to SCUs, LGUs, and NGO sectors. In a similar vein, *Los Baños Times* collaborators underwent a one-day training to expose them to the news production process and to enable them to write

their own stories. Oftentimes, community media lack people who are trained in basic writing and production skills (Opubor, 1999). These trainings would not only enable the collaborators to contribute stories to *Los Baños Times*, but these would also enhance the capacities of the collaborators in their line of work.

Likewise, Adopt-a-School has a component for service training of teachers. Engagements with development agencies and NGOs emphasized the need to capacitate stakeholders on conducting communication needs analysis, communication planning, designing and developing communication materials, and even monitoring and evaluation. It also pays to train project stakeholders on the use of the communication materials to maximize their effectiveness, either as stand-alone media or in combination with other communication materials. In the project on Financial Literacy for Microinsurance, a capability-building activity for microinsurance advocates was conducted, with each participant given the trainer's manual and accompanying copies of the posters, brochures, a flipchart, and a CD of the PowerPoint presentations.

CONCLUSION

The paper surveyed and described selected CDC major extension projects over the years, with materials development and production as major component. Based on these, the paper put forward some essentials of DevCom Los Baños Style of materials development and production such as: participation; pretesting; process-orientation; needs- and evidence-based content; cost-effectiveness; capability-building; and sustainability. These essentials support changes in the process of materials development and production – from the “large-volume/top-down approach” to bottom-up and stakeholder-specific approach.

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THE COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION EXTENSION PROGRAMS IN COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION: TOWARDS A NEW DOMAIN IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

CDC has ventured into exploring the development of community communication (comcom) as one of the domains of development communication. The paper analyzes how the elements of comcom have been operationalized and practiced in the various extension programs and projects of CDC through the years. It concluded by determining the essentials of community communication such as participatory approach, capacity building, empowerment, support of local institutions, and networking. Outcomes and impacts of the programs were identified as well, including the need for a clear comcom ethics.

INTRODUCTION

The three-fold function of instruction-research-extension is deeply embedded in the way the College of Development Communication (CDC) performs its activities. Concepts being taught are tested in the field as part of faculty's action research or as students' theses; their immediate practical outputs applied to the college's extension planning and implementation; and general learnings are derived to form part of the body of knowledge of various courses taught to students. In addition to "action-reflection", CDC makes it a point to engage in information/knowledge sharing among its partners and collaborators, thus expanding its operation paradigm to a cycle of action-reflection-sharing.