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A REVIEW OF CAMPAIGN EVALUATION AND ITS ROLE IN COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management,
University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of
Public and Development Management)

30 November 2006

ABSTRACT

This conceptual review is an introductory exploration of campaign evaluation's potential to support broader development processes. The review is not conclusive, but maps theoretical and empirical themes, highlights debates, identifies potentially constructive approaches, and notes areas for further investigation. It considers how a critical understanding of social systems, development paradigms and communication models may enhance campaign evaluation's transformative role. The review finds accountability to campaign funders often drives evaluation, rather than a commitment to those who most need to benefit from development. Amongst other factors, this limits evaluation's contribution to social change. The author concludes that 'constructive' evaluation differs from one context to another - each campaign requires a unique approach to optimise and sustain development outcomes. However, there remains considerable scope to develop campaign evaluation theory and practice for public value. This will require extensive dialogue; critical reflection; multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral and inter-organisational collaboration; and greater commitment to sustainable development.

DECLARATION

I declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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30 November 2006

DEDICATION

To Alasdair, who is just beginning to learn the art of communication,

and to all those who engage in dialogue for a better world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Dr Anne McLennan for her inspiring lectures and guidance with this research, and many others at the Wits School of Public and Development Management for the avenues they open to lifelong learning for public value.

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I accept responsibility for the content, analysis and any errors or omissions.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

During the past quarter century, in particular, governments and organisations around the world have faced increasing demands for greater accountability, transparency and effectiveness. Simultaneously, there has been growing awareness that knowledge and communication are critical in development processes.

This report documents an introductory exploration of literature that suggests how the evaluation of communication campaigns may contribute towards sustainable development. It does not intend to be conclusive, but rather aims to support the evolving discipline of development communication by mapping theoretical and empirical themes, highlighting debates, identifying constructive approaches, and noting areas for further investigation. It may also provide a resource for development practitioners, particularly in southern Africa, by suggesting where they may find information to help justify, fund, plan and evaluate campaigns.

The review has three main assumptions:

- Effective communication campaigns promote sustainable development
- Constructive evaluation supports development processes
- Political, social and economic contexts have a decisive effect on campaign impact

These assumptions suggest that in order to maximise the public value of campaign evaluation, the theoretical and empirical foundations of the process should support policies and strategies for systematic, meaningful change. The report therefore reviews literature that considers or illustrates how evaluation processes may broaden debates, stimulate dialogue, promote learning, influence policy cycles, encourage stakeholder involvement, empower marginalised groups, transform organisations and institutions, and strengthen social networks.

The first section of this opening chapter provides a brief conceptual and theoretical introduction to development communication campaigns and their evaluation. It also notes some challenges in the planning, funding and assessment of campaigns. Section two argues why such a review is needed. Sections three, four and five, respectively, state the review's purpose, describe its research strategy and note the study's limitations. Chapter two identifies key themes that emerged in the conceptual review. The third chapter reflects on these findings and proposes areas for further research. The final chapter concludes by noting some shortcomings of the review, summarising its findings and suggesting an approach with which to advance campaign evaluation for an optimally constructive development role.

1.1. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

1.1.1. Clarification of terms[1]

The discipline of development communication reflects various pragmatic, empirical and theoretical views on 'communication' and 'development'. Although there is no widespread consensus on what these terms mean, the discipline is generally concerned with communication research and interventions to improve the lives of people in developing nations.

Development is a complex, multifaceted and dynamic process of transformation towards what stakeholders[2] generally agree would be a better future.

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[1] Because the meaning of terms used in development, communication and evaluation vary so widely (see Section 2.1.), the definitions and explanations provided here merely intend to provide some clarity for the purposes of this research. Citations are not provided where the conceptual interpretation is the author's own understanding, based on experience, discussions and reflection over the past two decades. Numerous contributors to this growing personal understanding are gratefully acknowledged.

[2] *Stakeholders* are social groups who share an interest in the outcomes of a development process. They have the potential to influence the process and be affected by it. In this report, the term *primary stakeholders* refers to those people who most need to benefit from a development initiative. In communication literature *target market* is often used - a misnomer with negative power connotations. *Beneficiaries* also appears, but this may be seen as patronising or even be inaccurate when those people most in need experience little long-term campaign value.

For the purpose of this review, *development communication* is broadly defined as a process of dialogue that applies communication theories, methods and technologies to promote social change.

A development communication *campaign* is the intentional, strategic creation and sharing of information to promote dialogue, common understanding and widespread agreement that will lead to collective action in addressing a development challenge. Such initiatives should therefore involve stakeholders in various stages, from situational and needs analyses, to planning, implementation, monitoring and impact assessment.[3]

The *sustainability* of campaign outcomes refers to the maintenance and ongoing accrual of development benefits for stakeholders after the communication initiative's termination.

Campaign evaluation is the systematic, analytical assessment - within the context of policy and strategy - of a proposed, ongoing or completed communication initiative. Thus, although evaluation may be retrospective, its purpose is progressive. It is a forward-looking management tool and an action-orientated process for learning and improvement. Evaluation is 'applied' research in that it aims to identify problems or contribute towards meeting social needs. It assesses how appropriately campaign funds and efforts will be or have been spent, and suggests how such development resources could be more effectively used. Findings are analysed to determine what strategic elements are potentially or evidently effective, or not, and why. This information may then be used to refine campaign strategies, inform decision-making, direct resource allocation, promote accountability and influence broader development processes.

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[3] This research has not been limited to a specific type of campaign. It considers the evaluation of diverse communication initiatives, from complex international advocacy and national awareness campaigns to small-scale community education and mobilisation projects. It focuses on the extent to which evaluation has sought to promote sustainable development outcomes.

Different kinds of evaluation may be used at various campaign stages. *Formative evaluation* suggests how a campaign and its evaluation should be designed and implemented. *Summative evaluation* or *impact assessment* attempts to identify and analyse changes, intended and unintended, caused at individual, group, community and/or systemic levels. It indicates whether and why the initiative has significantly affected political, economic, behavioural, social, cultural, institutional or environmental issues. It may also consider campaign cost-effectiveness.

Evaluation involves identifying specific indicators with which to assess campaign efficacy. *Output indicators* - the direct results of campaign activities - are often easy to identify and occur within short timeframes, but seldom provide evidence of any significant effect on people's lives. *Outcome indicators*, however, are more likely to reflect meaningful changes brought about, at least in part, by campaign activities.

Campaign *impact* - the concrete changes the initiative makes to people's lives - is difficult to assess, because the campaign's effects may take a long time to materialise and it is often difficult to attribute social change to one specific intervention. Change needs to occur in many spheres before real, sustainable benefits manifest in people's lives and evidence should be sought in all these areas.

1.1.2. Communication campaigns for development

The eclectic body of development communication literature includes over 50 years of theoretical and empirical studies from the social, political, medical and business sciences. Practitioners have used a variety of communication principles, methodologies and strategies in attempts to change attitudes, behaviours, social structures, institutions, and other factors that constrain people in meeting their own needs and improving their wellbeing.

Since the 1950s, campaign approaches have focused on two main obstacles to development: lack of information and power inequalities (Melkote and Steeves, 2001; Servaes, 2004; Waisbord, 2001). Campaign

theory and practice have evolved: initially, the dissemination of information for individual behavioural change was considered adequate for 'development'; now, many frameworks and strategies deem participation, dialogue and empowerment as necessary for social change.

The dominant paradigms of modernist development theories influenced early contributions to development communication, which assumed information and modern values would change the way 'ignorant' people behave. They saw communication as a linear, unidirectional process of transmitting information through media channels to receivers.

Emerging from such models, *entertainment education* ('edutainment') strategies have the premise that individuals learn behaviour by observing and imitating role models, particularly those in the media [4]. The campaigns therefore use entertainment formats to disseminate information and pro-social messages through the mass media for maximum reach (Melkote and Steeves, 2001, pp 146-147; Waisbord, 2001, p 7).

Social marketing originated in the 1970s and its communication models adopted commercial management, marketing and advertising theories. Later, when under pressure to be more socially responsible, social marketers began to consider issues such as campaign ethics and "unintended consequences" because "life-improving social change is the challenge and goal of social marketing" (Kotler and Roberto, 1989, p ix-x). However, the rising popularity of the social marketing model, particularly in the public health sector, has coincided with a broader trend to commercialise social issues (Wilkins, 2000, pp 204-205). The implicit danger of such approaches is that campaigns target those with the capacity to purchase products or services, while the most needy stakeholders are precluded from participation and benefit (p 201).

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[4] The evaluation of *Soul City's* fourth edutainment series indicates that the pro-social role-modelling format may also effect change in communities (Usdin, Scheepers, Goldstein and Japhet, 2005).

Also during the 1970s, dependency theorists criticised top-down communication models that had failed address poverty and structural problems in the developing world. Informed by Marxist and critical theories, they accused modernist communicators of ignoring the factors that underpin inequality (Melkote and Steeves, 2001, pp 170-172; Waisbord, 2001, p 10). Critical and liberation theorists see development communication as an *emancipatory* process to build dialogue and consensus. Interventions must therefore be historically grounded, culturally sensitive, and consider power structures and social processes (Freire, 1970/1996; Melkote & Steeves, 2001, pp 38-39).

Significantly, Brazilian educator Paolo Freire (1970/1996) saw development communication as "free dialogue" that allowed communities to achieve cultural identity, trust, commitment, ownership and empowerment. He argued that dialogue is both a means to communicate and a goal of communication. His model stressed process rather than specific outcomes and allowed for participation in all stages of development projects. Through critical reflection, communities could develop attitudes and skills, with value beyond a project's lifetime.

The widespread failure of information diffusion and propaganda models, prompted some communicators to move towards community-based *participatory* paradigms. Generally, such approaches acknowledge people's abilities to recognise and resolve their social concerns, and their rights to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. They therefore aim to empower marginalised groups and promote dialogue so decisions are the result of collaboration among development stakeholders. In theory, participatory models change the traditional vertical, downward flow of information to horizontal, iterative, circular and multi-linear communication. In reality, however, the use of true participatory strategies has been limited due to misconceptions, confusion over desired outcomes, and issues of power and control (Melkote, 2000).

Communication for social change theorists argue that the traditional models are "generally insufficient in addressing the reality of the development problems" and "do not always reflect the complex changes in the communications environments taking place in many developing country societies" (Figueroa, Kinkaid, Rani and Lewis, 2002, p iii). For social change, they believe, a model must be "cyclical, relational and leading to outcomes of mutual, rather than individual or one-sided, change" (p ii). Campaign objectives go beyond individual behaviour change to social norms, policies, culture and the supporting environment; and outcomes need qualitative assessment to overcome the limitations of traditional quantitative indicators.

Advocacy is a participatory communications model that focuses on political processes and issues of social justice to bring about change through a series of planned interventions. The advocacy campaign's objective is to make an issue a political or national priority by advocating for changes in social environments that legitimise certain behaviours. Such initiatives seek to promote responsible media coverage of development issues to stimulate public debate, change public opinion and influence decision-making (Waisbord, 2001, p 11).

Closely linked to advocacy, *social mobilisation* is an evolutionary process in which groups of people identify a problem and address it by involving strategic allies in interactive networks and activities. Individuals and communities are encouraged to take control of their lives and environments, and challenge the status quo.

Communication models and concepts, some of which are mentioned above, are "complex social constructs whose meanings change over time" (Stiles, 2002, pp 12-24). Even within a campaign, actors may have different understandings of concepts and principles. This has implications for programme implementation, evaluation and, ultimately, impact.

Today, many promising campaign strategies combine a variety of communication models to address diverse development problems. For

example, the *Soul City's* edutainment model combines "ground-based partnerships", advocacy, social mobilisation, social marketing and mass media dissemination to address issues from HIV prevention to domestic violence (Singhal, Usdin, Scheepers, Goldstein and Japhet, 2004). However, despite some innovative new approaches, many researchers and practitioners continue to conceptualise communication as a relatively linear process of information transmission or persuasive marketing (Melkote and Steeves, 2001, pp 33 & 38; Servaes, 2004, p 64; Waisbord, 2001, p 7). The pressing need for more effective campaigns suggests that a more critical understanding of development paradigms and communication models may be key to realising the transformative potential of campaign evaluation.

1.1.3. Evaluation of development communication campaigns

As in development communication, various paradigms have influenced theoretical and empirical approaches to the evaluation of development initiatives. The changing meanings of the term 'evaluation' reflect historical contexts, assessment purposes, and the assumptions of researchers, scholars and practitioners (Wenzel, 1993; Roup, 1994).

Since the 1950s, influential paradigms have included modernisation, basic needs, neo-liberal structural adjustment and participatory approaches. Theories and methodologies from the disciplines of public health, social science, psychology, business management, marketing, media and communications, amongst others, have also influenced campaign evaluation.

Before the 1960s, quantitative and qualitative approaches dominated social science research. Since then, a third paradigm has emerged from the critical social science metatheory – a research approach that involves participation, action, change and dialogue. It aims to empower and emancipate participants, and research subjects control and 'own' as many aspects of the process as possible (Prozesky and Mouton, 2001, p 537).

Generally, 'participatory' evaluation methodologies try to balance researchers' needs for scientific evidence and communities' rights to participate in activities that concern their own wellbeing. Such approaches

aim to achieve, through dialogue, a more accurate assessment of needs and problems, as identified by the community itself. Research is a mutual activity with shared ownership of the process and the evaluation findings.

Since the 1970s, there has been growing recognition of the need for evaluation to consider the long-term impact of development initiatives. However, formative or 'front-end' evaluation of campaigns remains more advanced than 'back-end' evaluation of process, outcomes and impact (Coffman, 2002, pp 2, 12-14, 20-28). Generally, the potential of campaign evaluation to inform the conceptualisation, implementation and impact of development communication appears to largely be unrealised.

1.1.4. Campaign evaluation challenges

The unpredictable and often subtle outcomes of communication campaigns present challenges in assessing impact. Both numerical and verbal data may be needed for campaign assessment, but methods and techniques for quantitative evaluation tend to be more defined than those for qualitative and participatory research, where indicators are often not easily or consistently identified. Indicators need careful selection to distinguish significant changes from incidental ones, and to correctly identify any substantive trends that can be attributed to the campaign.

Campaign evaluation often aims to establish whether groups of people have acquired information, and subsequently changed their attitudes and behaviour. However, it is difficult to find reliable indicators of a campaign's affect on individuals, as human behaviour is not necessarily a logical response to a particular belief. Control groups may be difficult to create and factors unrelated to the campaign may cause the observed changes.

The evaluation of social change campaigns is problematic, primarily because the transformation of societies is often intangible and long-term. The current structure of development programming and funding suggests evaluation before or on completion of projects, when a campaign may only have started to produce results. Because evaluation feeds into decision-making processes, short deadlines for the submission of findings may

compromise the quality of evidence and long-term campaign effects may be ignored. Normative and critical evaluations are generally more resource intensive, and their benefits not immediately or obviously apparent.

In practice, donors, governments, and implementation agencies tend to control evaluation processes. The dominant positivist paradigm frequently dictates a focus on administrative campaign aspects and proof of impact, at the expense of human and systemic elements. The democratising and emancipatory potentials of participative evaluation are not necessarily desirable outcomes for powerful interest groups, which may therefore resist, limit or manipulate the assessment of campaigns.

If campaign evaluation can support sustainable development, thinking and experiences need to be widely shared. It is, however, important to avoid a 'pro-evaluation' bias – the assumption that evaluation, in general, is of value to development organisations and society.

1.2. THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

Too many development communication campaigns fail to inspire broad public participation or to produce significantly beneficial outcomes. Even efficient campaigns that produce good 'deliverables' often do not meaningfully affect many people's lives or facilitate change in the face of firmly established social norms, mores and structures. Is this because practitioners make the same assumptions, repeat mistakes or continue to use ineffective theories and methodologies? Do they focus too much on short-term campaign outputs, rather than on achieving realistic, substantive change in specific contexts?

Inappropriate paradigms, misleading assumptions, and a lack of strategic and practical capacity all appear to undermine campaign efficacy. Development communicators need skills and knowledge to effectively plan, implement and evaluate campaigns. Various disciplines and thorough analysis should inform their approaches.

While public and development managers may monitor campaign outputs, they do not seem to regard campaign evaluation as a credible, necessary or practical way to support development initiatives. This may be due to limited resources, the inherent difficulties in measuring campaign impact and the lack of explicit development value in evaluation processes. If, however, campaign evaluation has the potential to support effective communication and broader development processes, then awareness or development of constructive evaluation theories and methodologies should be encouraged.

This review explores how campaign evaluation may help build knowledge, capacity and support for development processes. In particular, it aims to promote communication efficacy in four ways, outlined below.

1.2.1. Clarify evaluation's potential role

If campaign evaluation can make a contribution to development, this may not be recognised because practitioners have not demonstrated its value, nor established its supportive role in development processes[5].

1.2.2. Develop human resources

If campaign evaluation can support development, this needs to be highlighted in curricula, and translated into required skills and knowledge.

1.2.3. Encourage more constructive evaluation

If certain campaign evaluation methodologies produce significantly better outcomes, then their potentially high costs, complicated and lengthy implementation processes, or unpredictable results need to be justified.

1.2.4. Promote dialogue for campaign efficacy

If campaign evaluation is to support inclusive, positive social change, methodologies need to be practical, accessible and process-orientated so that quality evidence, learning and social benefits can be channelled back into development initiatives and policy processes.

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[5] An online discussion forum on measuring the impact of development communication noted the difficulty practitioners face in proving the value of the discipline, particularly to policy- and decision-makers (World Bank, 2005).

1.3. PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

Based on these perceived needs, the review has three main objectives:

- to contribute towards the emerging discipline of development communication and, ultimately, more effective campaigns
- to map emerging themes, highlight debates and identify opportunities for development practitioners in the evaluation of campaigns
- to provide a resource for development practitioners, particularly those in southern Africa, by suggesting where they may find information and models to help justify, plan and evaluate campaigns for optimal impact

The research intends to meet these objectives by documenting and analysing the thinking, experiences and perspectives of academics, communication specialists, researchers and development practitioners.

1.4. RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHOD

1.4.1. Strategic approach

An initial scoping exercise examined a limited number of publications and e-forum communiqués on development communication. This suggested campaign evaluation as a current epistemic theme and topic of debate. The strategy for the literature review was informed by the perceived need for research, the proposed research objectives, the resources available for the review, and communication contexts in southern Africa.

The review takes a 'conceptual synthesis' approach. This research method aims to provide an overview of relevant literature to establish the implications of theories, concepts, models and debates for evidence-informed policy and practice, and to identify areas where knowledge is inadequate (Hartley, 2005, pp 8-9). The process emphasises key publications and uses these to find other authors and writings (p 9).

Development communication is multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral. Relevant literature may thus be found across scientific, technical, cultural and functional boundaries. However, as the research did not aim to be conclusive,

the review was limited to publications that suggest how campaign evaluation can play a constructive role in sustainable development.

Because development communication is inherently linked to socio-economic and political processes, the research adopted a critical, systemic approach. This means that it looked for literature that considered the *causes* of communication barriers and development needs when investigating the transformative effects of campaigns. Such evaluation intends – either explicitly or implicitly – to reveal the *systems* of social relationships that determine, in part, how individuals engage with campaigns and the collective consequences of their actions. Critical reflection and systemic analysis can build understanding of how interconnected factors and power relations affect peoples' well-being. This insight can empower people to transform their own environments.

Generally, the research strategy and method were adopted because:

- there appeared to have been little conceptual exploration of the broad research topic "campaign evaluation"
- most public campaigns appear to adopt positivist or phenomenological approaches which may limit their transformative potential

1.4.2. Publication search

Although the theory and practice of development communication draws from various disciplines, the initial literature search focused on public and development management, and the social sciences. In some instances, this led to areas such as public health, political science and education.

The following tools and resources were used in the search:

- Digital library catalogues and resources (using specific search terms)
- Internet search engines (using key words and advanced search tools)
- The Internet portals and websites of government bodies, development agencies and non-governmental organisations
- Online discussion forums, from which papers in press, unpublished papers, working papers and policy papers were obtained from authors
- The bibliographies of authoritative publications
- The student's personal library and network

1.4.3. Selection of literature

The research sought authoritative publications by academics, communication specialists, development agencies and practitioners that provide insight into theoretical and empirical approaches to campaign evaluation for development outcomes. As the research found relatively few publications directly related to the topic, relevant evaluation and development communication literature was included. The bias was towards literature relevant to southern African contexts, even if published outside Africa.

The review's key areas of exploration (see sections 1.2.1. – 1.2.4.) suggested criteria with which to select literature. Each publication was assessed according to whether it:

- promotes understanding of how campaign evaluation may support sustainable development
- contributes towards the discipline of development communication by
    - exploring theoretical, conceptual and empirical themes
    - stimulating debate
    - documenting exemplary practice or potentially useful approaches
    - suggesting areas for further research
- is a potential resource for development practitioners in southern Africa that could help justify, fund, plan and evaluate campaigns
- suggests how campaign evaluation can help broaden debates, promote stakeholder participation, empower marginalised groups, strengthen social networks, share learning or influence policy
- has theoretical and/or empirical foundations that support policies and strategies for systematic, meaningful change

Publications that were frequently cited by other authors or that focused on an emerging theme were specifically sought.

1.4.4. Analysis and conclusions

The literature was collectively analysed to map theoretical and empirical themes, highlight areas of debate, identify exemplary practice, and note areas for further investigation. This involved assessing the number of

times a particular issue was raised, highlighted or referred to, and looking for patterns in the dominant themes. It also involved an element of subjective judgement in deciding which themes were most relevant to campaign evaluation that could support sustainable development.

Generally, the analytical and reflective process sought to identify ways in which campaign evaluation could improve people's quality of life in a significant way, based on what these people believe to be beneficial.

1.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The review was limited to a selection of writings considered broadly relevant or applicable to campaign evaluation in diverse development areas, on macro and micro scales. The topic was intentionally broad to accommodate the following research restrictions:

- As development communication is a relatively young discipline, authoritative, critical publications on campaign evaluation are limited
- Published literature does not fully represent the body on evaluation work, as many reports are not made widely available
- Many texts discuss development communication strategy without discussing the evaluation of campaigns in any detail
- Capacity, time and financial restraints often limit the scope and quality of campaign evaluation, and thus the case studies available for review
- Most published evaluations are for individual behaviour change campaigns and there is relatively little assessment of the long-term impact or systems-level outcomes of campaigns
- Some literature on campaign evaluation does not offer directly relevant or useful perspectives for the southern African development context

Despite these limitations, a number of themes emerged during the review. These are outlined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2: KEY THEMES IN THE CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Generally, the broad body of development communication literature indicates that public and non-profit campaigns have, for various reasons, become increasingly sophisticated and strategic during recent decades. Simultaneously, development communicators appear to have faced growing pressures to demonstrate campaign 'impact' or efficacy. However, campaign evaluation continues to receive relatively little attention and investment when compared to other strategic areas of communication.

The majority of published campaign evaluations do not clearly acknowledge the potential of assessment processes or findings to support sustainable development. The literature suggests, however, that many development communication specialists do recognise that evaluation can help refine campaign strategies, build the discipline's body of knowledge and promote social transformation.

This chapter identifies key themes that emerged in reviewing opinions of how campaign evaluation may build knowledge, capacity and support for development processes. These themes, outlined below, may help clarify evaluation's potential contribution to development, identify human resource development, encourage more constructive evaluation, and stimulate debate about evaluation and campaign efficacy.

2.1. The importance of meaning

The literature suggests that development communicators and campaign evaluators do not routinely clarify the meaning of concepts that guide strategic and assessment processes. This implies that they seldom consider the implications of different stakeholder interpretations of the ideals or objectives implicit in evaluation terminology and rhetoric.

Historic, social and institutional contexts create inter-related layers of conceptual meaning, which promote certain power relations (Pieterse, 1996). When key concepts mean different things to campaign stakeholders, it affects communication and evaluation outcomes. Diverse

understandings of or associations with terms such as ‘communication’, ‘assessment’, ‘impact’ and ‘dialogue’ may undermine the implementation of evaluation methodologies and diminish the development value of research findings.

For example, Chapman, Miller, Junior, Uprety, Okwaare and Azumah (2005) observe that people’s understandings of and assumptions around terms like ‘power’, ‘gender’ and ‘change’ may weaken initiatives that aim to empower marginalised groups (p 2). Negative power connotations in narrow interpretations of ‘evaluation’ may reduce the value of reflective, learning and sharing processes (p 5).

Mefalopulos (2003) investigates how the meaning of ‘participatory communication’ affects the concept’s application at each stage of the project or campaign cycle. He finds that, despite their widely acknowledged benefits, both ‘participation’ and ‘communication’ have been poorly adopted into development practice, mainly because of their conceptual complexity and ambiguity (p 34). He argues that the consistent application of participatory communication principles is difficult when “the overall social and administrative structure is not fully compatible with this philosophy” (p 256). Furthermore, where terminology and conceptualisation are rooted in an inappropriate (“the dominant”) paradigm, the application of potentially beneficial methodologies and their ideals will be limited (pp 75-76).

This view is supported by Wallace and Chapman (2004) who contest the “fashionable rhetoric” of donor organisations that suggests a commitment to participatory evaluation, learning and local ownership. In practice, the authors maintain, “the drive to show control of events, to muster evidence to support an input-output rational logical model of change … dominates” (p 12).

Chapman *et al* (2005, p 2) find that guiding concepts - particularly those fundamental to emancipatory thinking and communicative action - often loose their original meaning and purpose. They believe this loss of conceptual meaning and knowledge is partly due to:

- the cooption of ideas and language as concepts become mainstreamed and depoliticised
- the reframing of ideas and knowledge by development institutions that shifts their focus away from transforming inequitable power relations
- the increasing 'professionalisation' of development work, which prioritises technical skill over political consciousness

Concepts in campaign evaluation may be difficult to define because they are used in diverse contexts, with different purposes and in a variety of processes. However, conceptual meaning is important because it has social consequences - it can shape research agendas, the kind of knowledge evaluation produces and the way in which findings are applied (Stone, Maxwell and Keating, 2001, pp 30-31; Prozesky and Mouton, 2001, p 547).

2.2. Issues of accountability

Communication campaigns are increasingly required to account for their use of development resources, often through a process of 'objective' evaluation. A recurrent theme in the literature concerns issues of to whom *campaigns and their evaluation are accountable and* for what.

The literature suggests that in some instances, 'accountability' extends beyond satisfying those who foot the bill, to gaining the approval of other stakeholders for campaign efficiency, efficacy or lessons learned. An alternative to conventional donor-focussed evaluations is suggested by participatory approaches that are orientated towards the needs of primary stakeholders - those people who most need to benefit from the development initiative.

The difference between these two approaches is illustrated in Figures 1.1. and 1.2. below, in which the main direction of accountability is indicated by the solid black arrow:

Figure 1.1. Accountability in the conventional evaluation model

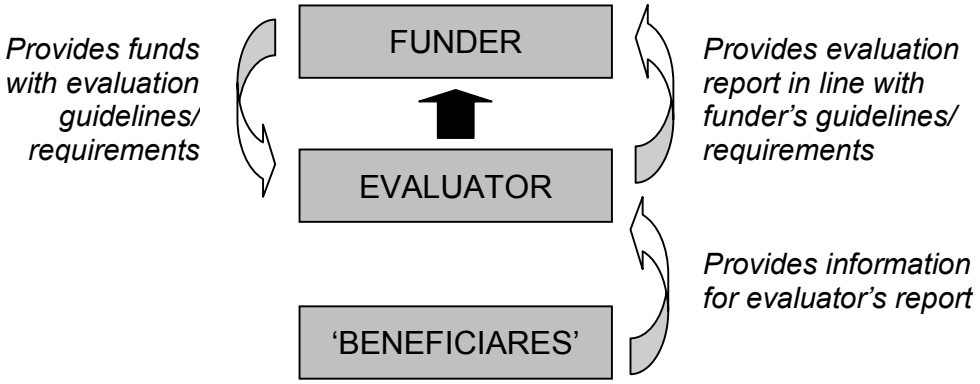
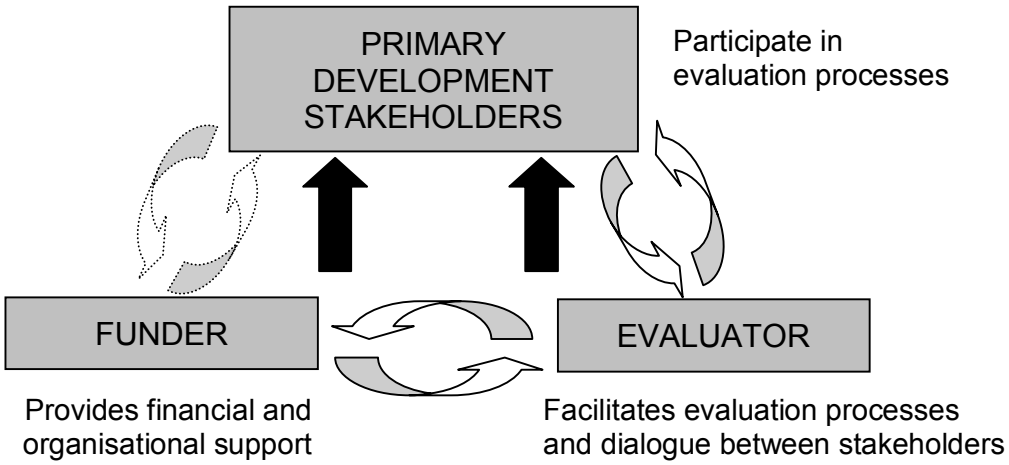


Figure 1.2. Accountability in an alternative evaluation model



In advocacy campaigns, Chapman and Wameyo (2001, p 37) identify a shift towards greater accountability to the poor and marginalised people. For example, ActionAid's "internal reporting and learning system" requires poor people's priorities and perspectives to inform decision-making at all levels. This principle underlies the organisation's participatory approach to campaign evaluation that builds 'ownership' of both the process and the information generated. However, the values of funding agencies largely continue to determine what evaluation seeks to establish and to whom initiatives will be accountable, which in turn determines who participates and who does not (p iii).

Wallace and Chapman (2004) observe that project management tools from developed nations dominate current policies and procedures for aid disbursement. These tools place “more emphasis on the needs of donors and paperwork than on the realities of development processes and accounting to the people who are the supposed beneficiaries of the whole process” (p 20). The focus of aid structures and donors on tangible, demonstrable development results has created a culture of target-setting, performance management and bureaucratic control (p 1). This reinforces power imbalances and undermines “concepts of partnership which require two-way negotiation, listening, and downward accountability” (p 12). The authors maintain the “current obsession with almost instant, demonstrable impact is distorting and needs challenging at every level” (p 21).

Charlish, David, Foresti, Knight and Newens (2003, p 12) refer to “intelligent accountability”, a new approach that “recognises what is important and gives up the fantasy of total control [because] much that has to be accounted for is not easily measured, cannot be oiled down to set of stock performance indicators”. Whitehouse (2004, pp 1-7) also discusses weaknesses in the “indicator approach” and challenges the validity and efficacy of investing in measurements that prove nothing more than common sense would suggest. However, Winderl (pp 8-10) defends the value of indicators, pointing out misconceptions of their nature and function.

Theoretically, economic or social cost-benefit analyses of campaigns allow the comparison of alternative resource uses to meet development objectives. Coulson (2003, p 18) observes, however, that there are very few studies of cost-effectiveness in the use of mass media for development. Levine (CGD, 2006, pp 2-6) suspects this may be due to cost-benefit assessments not taking into account the public good that comes from evaluation or concern about the consequences of unfavourable results. Generally, however, he believes there are insufficient institutional incentives for systematic, independent, rigorous evaluation of social programmes.

Myers (p 17) argues that pressure to demonstrate campaign cost-effectiveness should be resisted as it is invidious and "morally indefensible to compare projects simply on a cost-per-head basis": For instance, is a campaign that reaches 40 million people with cost benefits of scale more worthwhile than one that reaches 40 000 people? Should a minority group or remote, small state be deprived of a campaign because it costs more for a message to reach individuals? Myers maintains that the development benefits of a campaign cannot be quantified in monetary terms.

Accountability may be extended beyond campaign efficacy to evaluation itself, in terms of its meeting specific objectives and development purposes. In demonstrating and reporting accountability, there are various ways to interpret and frame evidence. These could enhance or undermine the value of findings, depending on the purpose for which the evidence is used.

2.3. Elusive evidence of impact

Numerous dilemmas confound efforts to measure campaign impact. The literature confirms how problematic it can be to assess efficacy and attribute significant changes to the effects of a campaign. Nevertheless, there is often pressure for development communicators to verify the public value of their campaigns through 'impact assessment'.

While campaign efficiency, in terms of outputs, may be relatively easy to gauge, few evaluations convincingly demonstrate a campaign's development value or social impact. This does not necessarily mean most campaigns have little merit, but rather indicates how campaign outcomes and social change are the result of multiple, interacting forces and actors at different levels. Rice and Foote (2001, cited in Coffman 2002, p 11) maintain that the "horizontal and vertical complexity" of public communication campaigns makes their evaluation difficult, where horizontal complexity refers to the number of sectors the campaign aims to affect (social, environmental, economic or political) and vertical complexity to intended outcomes at cognitive, individual behaviour, community or systems levels.

Coffman (2002, pp 20-28) explains that *process evaluation,* which assesses "effort" or direct outputs, does not necessarily reveal anything about campaign effects. *Outcome evaluation* attempts to determine these effects by gauging, for example, cognitive, behavioural, social, environmental, media and policy change. *Impact evaluation* - the appraisal of a campaign's ultimate, aggregate, long-term, system-level results - is rare due to difficulties in attributing such change to the one initiative.

Sutton (2002, pp 1-2) believes many campaign evaluations try to apply causal paradigms, but the multifaceted, dynamic nature of communication often makes detecting cause-and-effect relationships impossible. She argues that experimental or quasi-experimental designs set artificial controls, lack flexibility for campaign evolution, have insufficient information for causal claims and cannot separate campaign effects from those of other initiatives with similar objectives.

Her concerns are echoed by Chapman and Wameyo (2001, pp 5-8), who add the following challenges in advocacy campaign evaluation:

- Partner and stakeholder subjectivity determines whether gains are significant and consistent with objectives
- Campaign goals may shift or develop, and thus indicators may change
- Strategic concepts and positive outcomes may mean different things to partners in networks and coalitions
- Policy reform may be slow and incremental, with implementation and impact lagging significantly behind it
- Campaigns may have unpredictable political consequences and cause inter-group conflict, which is difficult to map and assess

Many development communicators and evaluators believe campaign impact assessment methods need further development. Henry (2002, p 1), for example, argues that evaluation methodologies are "vastly deficient", and the research base of diverse fields should inform the conceptualisation and measurement of interrelated campaign outcomes. He points to 'educational' campaign assessment, which has "relied too

much on awareness as an outcome and not considered salience or the extent to which [people] are personally concerned with an issue" - knowledge does not necessarily have a causal relationship with changes in behaviour, attitudes or policy.

While it may be relatively easy to determine the success of small-scale, well-planned communication initiatives with clear outcomes and monitoring procedures, larger collaborative campaigns are more difficult to assess, particularly without reliable social development indicators and statistics. For example, Stiles (2002) identifies areas where an advocacy and social mobilisation strategy may have contributed to the achievement of development programme objectives in Pakistan, but concedes it was difficult to attribute the extent to which the strategy had affected macro-level trends and indicators, partly because of inadequate monitoring data.

Of the campaign evaluation studies reviewed by Bowes (2005), few measured "eventual gains in vital statistics", which would require "a time scale few studies can sustain institutionally or financially" (p 14). Schilderman (2002, p 45) concedes that while many agencies base impact assessment on anecdotal evidence and output indicators, effective measurement can be complex and costly due to complex processes and lengthy information chains.

Goldstein (2000) notes pressure from funders to prove that programmes directly cause positive change, but intended results may only transpire with consistent funding over many years. For example, a *Soul City* series evaluation period of eight to nine months between baseline and evaluation assessment is "relatively short" and this "could well impact on the likelihood of detecting measurable behaviour change" (Soul City, 2001, p 49, cited in Coulson, 2003, p 15). Tufte (2003) also identifies an inherent "tension" in *Soul City's* efforts to find evidence of behaviour change prompted by its programmes and the long-term nature of individual, community and social change.

It can take a decade or more of advocacy, social mobilisation and associated programme communication to bring about attitudinal, behavioural and systemic change in societies. This implies that evaluators should not waste resources looking for campaign impact that does not exist or that cannot be directly attributed to the initiative. However, depending on the campaign's strategic and development objectives, evaluators may develop indicators that reflect different dimensions of change – such as policy, civil society, private sector democracy and individual - for outputs (activities), outcomes (progress) and impact (Lloyd Laney, 2003, pp 3-6).

For example, ActionAid's campaign assessment criteria include policy gains, political and democratic gains, civil society gains, partnership gains and organisational gains (Coulby, 2005, p 7). The International Development Research Centre's (IDRC) framework for advocacy impact includes indicators of change in the social aspects of culture and at the individual level (Chapman and Wameyo, 2001, p 14). Changes in areas such as gender and family relations, political awareness, and personal self-worth may indicate when campaigns have helped disempowered and disenfranchised groups become "active protagonists" with "proactive attitudes and concrete capabilities" to defend and advance their rights.

Healthlink (2006) lists potential indicators of impact in HIV and AIDS communication in three categories: structural and environmental change; public information environment; and community participation and dialogue. Although at face value the indicators appear to fit the kind of objectives one would expect of an advocacy campaign, there is no reason why the categories and some of the indicators should not be considered for behaviour change campaigns, as such change is arguably only achieved and sustained in supportive environments.

Some development communicators believe it is not only important to be able to *detect* social change, but also to *explain* the changes" (WHO, 2004, p 63). For this reason, the World Health Organisation's (WHO)

Guide to Monitoring and Evaluating National HIV/AIDS Prevention Programmes for Young People, broadens its evaluation focus to include individual behaviours *and* the determinants of these behaviours. It places HIV and AIDS within a wider context of adolescent health and development.

The literature suggests that there are risks in narrow 'cause-effect' and 'impact measurement' mentalities for campaign evaluation. In particular, scarce development resources may be squandered by focusing on potentially elusive variables, rather than the potential to incrementally transform societies through learning for a better future. For this reason, Lloyd Laney (2003, p 7) suggests being "satisfied with a critically informed assessment of change" where evidence of impact will be difficult to find.

2.4. Evaluation's transformative potential

The body of development literature suggests that, in itself, evaluation can be a transformative process that helps align strategies, resources and capacities, and supports the creation of enabling environments for sustainable outcomes. Process and approach, rather than specific methods and measuring techniques, appear to be key to enhancing the value of evaluation and realising this transformative potential.

In some instances, awareness of this potential has resulted in new practices: evaluation is no longer limited to the production of a formal report and set of recommendations. An increasing number of assessments appear to be exploring the benefits of process-based, stakeholder-centred approaches to campaign evaluation that may offer more sustainable development benefits than traditional methodologies. For example, short-term, logical output assessments may be supplemented or replaced by reflective evaluation processes with "open-ended learning" that accommodate complexity and unpredictable outcomes (ECDPM, 2002, pp 29-30).

The process-based collaborative approach to change aims to institutionalise systems that stress consensus, participation, broad

ownership, dialogue and accountability (Heckscher, Eisenstat and Rice, 1994). The long-term objective is to create new systems, rather than patterns of action within an existing system (p 160). However, broadening decision-making within campaign evaluation processes will not automatically transform the bureaucratic order or liberate thinking from dominant paradigms - newly "empowered", participative structures of conventional models may "fit easily into the old order without changing the old logic" (pp 138-9).

Mefalopulos (2003) stresses that endogenously-driven and process-orientated dialogue should be actively nurtured in all campaign stages and not merely feature at a theoretical level. The 'process' approach to impact assessment, he argues, "ensures a continuous sharing of knowledge and experiences usually facilitating the capacity-building that could be considered an advanced [empowering] form of participation" (p 243).

Patton (1997; 2003/4, p 2) believes "process use" is a significant development in evaluation, in that it allows for dual tracks of impact – findings can be used, *and* it can help people "learn to think and engage each other evaluatively [or critically]" (p 3). Learning through process use is indicated by changes in thinking, behaviour, programmes, procedures and organisational culture.

The literature suggests that like all communication-based processes, evaluation is most effective when it forms relationships based on mutual respect and trust. Evaluation should therefore be supportive, useful and credible to those who can learn from and implement its recommendations. Importantly, campaigns and their evaluation should not be seen as short-term add-ons to other projects. Rather, they need to be considered in context as part of ongoing development programmes. Planning, reflection and learning are not static, unrelated processes, but rather iterative, continuous and dynamic ones that build on each other over time in "the slow, sometimes back and forth, dance of social change" (Chapman *et al*, 2005, p 6).

2.5. Skills, knowledge and capacity

Although the combination of skills required for evaluation depends on the specific needs of each campaign, evaluators clearly need more than empirical research abilities. This is partly due to complex development communication contexts and partly because evaluation is a normative process that involves establishing and analysing standards or values, and then integrating them with factual results to reach conclusions.

Scriven (2005, pp 1-2) believes evaluation skills include the ability to determine relevant technical, legal and scientific values, and the ability to address controversial values and issues. However, "the ability to synthesize is probably the key cognitive skill needed for evaluation" as it is required to integrate relevant evaluative and factual conclusions, and to reconcile multiple and possibly contradictory findings for the same programme. For example, evaluation may go beyond hypothesis-testing to seek a campaign's unexpected consequences and these findings "[may swing] the overall evaluative conclusion from bad to good or vice versa".

Campaign evaluators need to critically examine theories, methodologies and 'best practices'. Those without theoretical knowledge are therefore "doomed to repeat past mistakes and, equally debilitating, will fail to sustain and build on past successes" (Madaus, Scriven and Stufflebeam, 1983, cited in Mark, 2005, p 1).

A critical, analytical approach to evaluation and a thorough understanding of the communication context are particularly important when evaluators draw from theory and practice in other environments. For example, Irama (2005, p 3) contends "a 'home-grown' approach is the key to development of Africa and her peoples and ultimately the eradication of poverty on the continent". She also maintains:

> "[T]here is no 'one-size fits all' approach to advocacy, but a growing recognition that civil society must understand various factors – from historical perspectives and constructs to socio-economic and political context in order to re-construct power relations from a people-centred perspective in Africa."

Capacity for campaign evaluation needs to be assessed at various levels, although not all of them are necessarily relevant in each case. Chapman and Wameyo (2001, pp 24-34) outline frameworks to gauge capacity at:

- individual and group levels (empowerment, organisational)
- societal levels (social capital)
- local, regional, national and international levels (in networks, movements, coalitions)

Chapman *et al* (2005, p 7) argue that developing new evaluation tools and frameworks is not as urgent as finding ways to effectively use existing ones for critical thinking, participation and action. Their application should affirm and reflect values that support sustainable development, but without appropriate skills and leadership capacity to foster effective planning, evaluation, learning and teamwork, even the best methodologies prove meaningless (p 8).

Some of the literature on participatory approaches highlights the particular skills and aptitudes required by evaluators to empower stakeholders through dialogue, self-reflection and self-actualisation. As facilitators of such processes, evaluators need to be willing and able to actively listen, culturally aware, sensitive, humble, and have an open attitude towards people and change.

Evaluators should also be aware of ethical issues and able to deal with their implications. For example, if evaluation fails to detect unintended consequences of a behaviour change campaign, people's health, lives and general wellbeing could be seriously compromised. In other instances, people's participation in processes to promote equality could place them in conflict situations. Participants need to be aware of and prepared to deal with the potential consequences of their involvement.

The following observation by Dalrymple (2004, p 2S) illustrates the importance of evaluators' contextual understanding and ethical consciousness:

> "Culture and tradition are inextricably linked with hierarchy and to tamper with cultural forms affronts some people's dignity and self esteem [and therefore to] affirm some cultural practices while observing a participatory model that strengthens democratic processes can become contradictory."

The apparently pressing need to build evaluation capacity highlights the importance of collaborative learning, and opportunities to share theoretical expertise, field experience and development knowledge.

2.6. Learning and collaboration

Evaluation's learning function and society's interaction around evaluation findings have recently gained recognition as "vital complements" to evaluation's "more conventional control and accountability function" (ECDPM, 2002, p 4). Campaign evaluation, the literature suggests, has development value when it contributes appropriate information, skills and ideas to change processes. Enhanced collaborative learning takes place when evaluation processes and findings are relevant to and enriched by collective experiences, reflection and social interaction in all campaign areas.

However, Sutton (2002, pp 1-2) observes that many campaign evaluations "don't tell us why a campaign did or did not work, which limits our ability to learn and influence future efforts". She therefore proposes an evaluation framework to "more closely track and assess a campaign's activities and interim results and link them to its ultimate goals", while feeding data on tactical progress into the programme "to improve its chance of success".

Rist (2003/4, p 4) maintains that evaluation has generally been understood as "a self-contained intellectual or practical product intended to answer the information needs of an intended user" and evaluation findings as having the potential for "direct, instrumental enlightenment". However, he has observed a new focus in more recent evaluation debates on "notions of process use" or "influence".

Ravallion (2005, pp 51-63) argues that the primary focus of evaluation literature has been on "internal validity" – how evaluation design allows a

reliable estimate of impact in a specific context. Less has been written about “external validity” or what can be learned from evaluations so that results can be replicated elsewhere, and lessons drawn for development knowledge and policy-making.

Ravallion believes evaluations need to “throw light on the processes that influence measured outcomes” (p 53). Furthermore, standard evaluation practices are “disappointingly uninformative” in terms of the lessons they draw for future policies (p 58) and a richer set of impact parameters, directly related to specific policy questions, is required (p 63).

Carlsson (ECDPM, 2002, p 18) identifies a need for “more systematically gathered locally relevant data to feed into national frameworks” so that more learning can take place in policy and programme planning, at organisational level, and in broader society. Generally, she observes, those who learn from evaluations either commissioned the research or are directly involved in project implementation - evaluation results are rarely widely shared in the public domain.

Hovland (2005), however, argues that it is not necessarily *more* communication of evidence required, but *better* communication that inspires and informs policy and practice. She notes that the conditions under which research is communicated is largely determined by wider systems, including political and socio-economic contexts. Large civil society organisations and bilateral agencies may have a communications advantage at the systemic level, while smaller NGOs and intermediary organisations may be advantaged at project and interpersonal levels (p 4). Such organisations need to work together to optimise the use and development benefits of evaluation findings.

The need for enhanced, collaborative learning is echoed by Schilderman (2002, p 50) who contends that better documentation and wider sharing of evaluation findings would help decision-making in diverse development areas. He believes activities to share appropriate, accessible knowledge and information should not necessarily be “stand-alone” initiatives (p 47).

In addition, several agencies collaborating on projects and sharing information may be better able to address multiple, varying needs.

Pieterse (2001, p 40) argues that institutions need to work in "self-critical" partnerships and alliances to support primary development actors: democratic community-based organisations and households. The most serious obstacle to development, he maintains, is the inability of institutions to define a specific purpose and to "systematically induce *systemic* change". He stresses that the "transgression of sectoral, specialist and other boundaries is critical … if integrated development is to move from an ideal to reality".

Senge (1990, pp 486-7) observes that the primary institutions in society are orientated towards controlling rather than learning. Thus, by seeking the approval of powerful donors and agencies, campaigns may "create the very conditions that predestine them to mediocre performance" and prevent evaluation from supporting the creation of innovative, adaptive solutions to environmental challenges (p 487).

Chapman and Wameyo (2001) argue that there are seldom enabling conditions, resources and incentives for evaluation, and funder-required evaluation is often perceived as a burdensome, extraneous requirement, rather than as an opportunity to learn and improve the quality of initiatives. For this reason, progressive development agencies are exploring more participative and collaborative frameworks to share and learn from experience, and effectively plan and implement future initiatives.

Chapman *et al* (2005, p 4) believe participating organisations need to develop collective planning, action, review and learning processes to strengthen empowerment processes, and build knowledge, hope and innovation. They need to tap into different kinds of expertise and knowledge to combine the experiences of many groups and individuals.

Myers (2002, p 9) contends that it is "on the strength or the weakness of inter-organizational links that campaigns stand or fall … [a] high degree of

trust and goodwill among all parties is essential, often depending on personal relationships and contacts".

Much of the discussion around the potential contribution of evaluation highlights the importance of long-term, broad-based commitment to development objectives, particularly those of extensive, integrated, multi-level, multi-partner development programmes. Credible information about campaign outcomes – achievements, shortcomings, learning and potential – needs to effectively communicated if evaluation's value is to be optimised. In addition, cross-sector collaboration, knowledge transfer, theory-building and learning could raise awareness of existing tools and improve evaluation practice and results (Coffman, 2002).

There are encouraging signs that the value and potential of campaign evaluation are being explored, but there remains much scope to develop theory and practice. Coffman (2002, p 4) believes those searching for appropriate methodologies lack evaluation support, definitive guides or mechanisms for learning.

And while Heckscher *et al* (1994) maintain collaborative systems are a "developmental leap" to allow a gradual accumulation of knowledge (p 129), they concede that processes with flexible, responsive and inclusive structures are "extremely difficult, halting and subject to many diversions" (p 145).

2.7. Theory and practice

Theoretical frameworks help development communicators and campaign evaluators devise strategies and select appropriate methodologies to achieve certain purposes in specific contexts. The literature highlights the importance of identifying or developing appropriate, constructive theoretical approaches, and the challenge of translating theory into effective practice. No single model is effective for all campaign evaluations and practitioners need to be open-minded, critical and creative in their adoption of frameworks.

Mefalopulos (2003, p 241) believes it is possible to devise flexible “working models” that comply with the basic principles of endogenously-driven and dialogue-based participatory approaches and can be applied in any context. However, such methodologies for campaign evaluation still need to be critically assessed and, where necessary, adapted to support development in specific contexts.

Ravallion (2005, pp 62 – 63) argues that each evaluation should pragmatically draw from a range of tools, often combining methodologies. He observes that effective evaluations “typically require that the evaluator is involved from the [campaign’s] inception and is very well informed about how the program works on the ground”.

Mark (2005) contends that evaluation theories can help consolidate lessons learned or synthesise experience, and theory comparisons can identify areas of debate and build understanding in the field. He cites various perspectives that illustrate how theorists may take different positions on how evaluation should be used to achieve development purposes.

Theory and research are inevitably biased by opinion, beliefs, ideology, culture and history (Stone *et al,* 2001, pp 30-31), and such preconceptions can undermine the quality of evaluation findings. Chapman and Wameyo (2001, p 37) therefore caution that “frameworks should be used as tools to facilitate creative thinking while allowing evaluators to remain open to unintended outcomes that fall outside the adopted assessment structure”.

Frameworks currently used by campaign evaluators have their roots in diverse fields, from public health, clinical disciplines and social science to marketing communications and new public management. Weiss (2003/4, p 2) observes that initiatives are assessed “against the explicit claims and tacit assumptions that provide [the campaign and/or evaluation’s] rationale”. For instance, the logical framework offered by programme theory may be used to plan data collection. It may then compel evaluators to claim a reasonable approximation of causality, and offer theory-based explanations of why and how the campaign worked.

The literature suggests that an increasing number of development communicators recognise that inappropriate paradigms and frameworks may limit evaluation's potential to support social change. They are therefore calling for further development of campaign evaluation theory, as well as greater investment in education, knowledge sharing, tool development, data sets and in evaluation itself Coffman (2002, p 3).

Chapman and Wameyo (2001) argue that project-focused evaluation systems and methods are inadequate for the development of civil society and its ability to hold decision-makers accountable. For instance, the evaluation of advocacy campaigns is critically underdeveloped, with a lack of culturally appropriate, gender-sensitive, locally developed methods.

Patton (2002, p 1) notes that while qualitative and critical methodologies have gained greater acceptance in many areas of campaign evaluation, theorists and practitioners recognise the need for disciplined, credible techniques that "help us stand back from our tendency to have biases, prejudices, and preconceptions". He argues, however, that the decision to use formative, process, outcomes and/or impact evaluation should be negotiated and made by those who intend using the findings (1997). The campaign evaluation system should suit the initiative's purpose, objectives and resources.

Frequently, existing frameworks do not encourage or allow for campaign assessment within a wider context to consider how governments and development agencies could more effectively improve people's lives. However, some organisations are progressively developing campaign evaluation systems as part of broader performance assessment processes (Charlish *et al*, 2003). Their methodological approaches reflect the social dimensions that their campaigns aim to influence. For example, Oxfam GB and Save the Children-UK's assessment frameworks define dimensions of change to help analysis across campaign contexts and objectives (pp 4-5). Their systems promote learning, "intelligent accountability", transparency, stakeholder involvement, empowerment and external scrutiny.

Charlish *et al* (pp 2-3) stress the value of combining methodologies and tools to meet specific evaluation and development objectives. They believe frameworks should be developed to more accurately measure social change against objectives, and to ensure consistency for the evaluation work of staff and partners. Such frameworks need to be flexible enough to accommodate the diversity and complexities inherent in development work, especially in large organisations and alliances. At the same time, evaluators need to continuously look for environmental or contextual changes and adapt frameworks accordingly.

Davies (2003) proposes the use of social network perspectives in the evaluation of development initiatives as such models of change can accommodate mutual, circular and linear processes of influence. They are able to represent real systems of relationships that have varying degrees of order/chaos, complexity/simplicity and formality/informality on local to global scales. He believes that a coherent network approach needs to be developed to "extend our expectations of how development interventions should be represented and analysed" (p 18).

In her discussion of public communication campaigns, Coffman (2002, pp 2, 14-16) notes the lack of consensus "about the state of campaign evaluation and what direction it should take in the future". She argues that those who subscribe to the *causal paradigm* believe more, rigorous evaluation is needed to deliver definitive answers about what works and whether the campaign caused its intended effects. To them, an effective methodology will work in other contexts. Critics of the causal paradigm believe such evaluation usually lacks sufficient evidence of campaign success and ultimately fails to show any causal link between the campaign and its outcomes and impact. Others, Coffman observes, believe evaluation should be more practical and process-oriented, to quickly channel findings back into the campaign as it is implemented or more widely share information to improve campaign efficacy, promote learning, stimulate debate, build knowledge and influence policy.

Patton (2002, p 2) maintains that what distinguishes one evaluation approach from another is the “bottom line” that is adopted. For example, his “utilization-focussed” approach places its emphasis on the pragmatic use of evaluation findings and the evaluation process. The evaluation design and implementation must make a difference to improving development programmes and their decision-making. This means that findings should be timed to contribute towards decision-making, which is not necessarily at the end of a campaign, and evaluators should anticipate the questions decision-makers bring development initiatives so that relevant data can be gathered for specific decision-making contexts.

Dorfman, Ervice and Woodruff (2002, pp 4-7) propose that campaigns be differentiated along axes of purpose, scope and maturity, as these aspects present distinct evaluation challenges and will affect the suitability of various evaluation approaches. Campaign scope refers to size, extent, frequency and reach over time, while maturity refers to the way campaigns are adapted over time to meet the requirements of changing contexts.

Many of the problems campaigns aim to address are both a cause and an effect of underdevelopment, and are often linked to complex issues of poverty, discrimination, inequality and marginalisation. Communicators increasingly acknowledge this, as well as the failure of traditional approaches to have any significant impact. They are therefore seeking broader, longer-term, more holistic, collaborative and inclusive approaches to address social, cultural, political and economic barriers to development.

Amongst the most innovative and progressive frameworks in the literature are those based on open and ongoing dialogue between stakeholders. They seek to involve the people most affected by a problem in defining the issue, finding solutions and evaluating progress. Some, like Chapman and Wameyo (2001, p iii), believe the ultimate indicator of campaign success is that the people whose lives are most affected recognise and value their own work.

2.8. Participatory approaches

Participatory evaluation allows those who are affected by a development issue to give their perspectives on the difference a campaign could make, is making or has made to improving people's lives. Participants may help decide on research methods, questions and indicators, and then be involved in research implementation and the analysis of findings to assess the effectiveness of campaign activities and their impact over time.

Campaigns with 'people-centred' and 'rights-based' approaches to communication and its evaluation, encourage 'bottom-up' participation that enables marginalised groups to assert their rights and advocate directly on their own behalf. This allows people to become "the subjects of their own development, not the objects of development strategies set by outside stakeholders" (Ford, 2001, p 4, cited in Stiles, 2002, p 15). Jackson and Kassam (1998, p 3) maintain that what binds the diverse literature on participatory evaluation is "the conviction that *evaluation should and can be used to empower the local citizens to analyze and solve their own problems".*

Kelly and Van Der Riet (2000, p 31) argue that most of what researchers seek in enquiry "will only be discovered with reflection, by adopting new ways of thinking and different perspectives". In this sense, the outcome of a campaign's evaluation is "created in dialogue between the enquirer and the context of enquiry" – a fusion of local knowledge and understanding with the possibilities which arise during the evaluative process.

Jackson and Kassam (1998, p 1) believe shared knowledge is the "essence" of participatory evaluation and that it "better serves the interests of both local beneficiaries and development agencies". They contend that the collective knowledge that emerges through the participatory process is "more accurate, more complex, and more useful than knowledge that is produced and deployed by professionals alone".

In general, drawing from White (1982, cited in Mefalopulos, 2003, p 33), those who advocate participatory approaches believe they:

- have intrinsic value for participants
- are a catalyst for further development efforts
- lead to sense of ownership or responsibility for the initiative
- ensure that initiatives address felt needs
- find appropriate ways to implement strategies
- draw on local knowledge and expertise
- free participants from dependence on outsiders and professionals
- bring about "conscientization" or people's greater understanding of the nature of their constraints to development

To realise these benefits, participants need incentives for their involvement, clear roles and responsibilities, and appropriate tools and capacities to collect, analyse and use data (Lloyd Laney (2003, p 6). Lessons learned should feed back to those managing the process and implementing the campaign, and to others who may benefit from such insight and knowledge (p 7). In addition, communicating evaluation conclusions "stimulates interest in further work; heartens those involved; impresses decision-makers; and forges new alliances".

Like Myers (2002, p 10), a growing number of communicators recognise that a campaign's environment becomes more receptive "with a strong emphasis on research and monitoring, audience liaison and feedback". However, as Kelly and Van Der Riet (2000, pp 11-13) point out, stakeholder groups are not necessarily empowered to participate in dialogue from the outset of the evaluation process. Their capacities may need to be strengthened as part of the research objectives.

White and Pettit (2004, pp 18-19) note that participatory approaches are increasingly being combined with conventional survey and statistical methods: "[M]icro-level and qualitative participatory research methods can be used to identify appropriate criteria and questions, and to design better surveys which are then implemented in a conventional manner".

While third-party professionals usually conduct campaign evaluations, Patton (1997) believes there is a trend towards processes in which other participants make major design decisions, gather and analyse data, and draw and apply conclusions. He maintains that stakeholders who are empowered in their roles as facilitators, collaborators and learning resources, are more likely to implement recommendations.

The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique (Davies and Dart, 2005) is one of the participatory evaluation tools currently being used for campaign assessment. It involves multiple stakeholders in decisions about what ongoing monitoring should record and in the analysis of impact and outcome data. Participants' stories of "significant change" are collected to demonstrate campaign impact and highlight social issues.

Outcome Mapping is an evaluation tool that focuses on how people relate to each other and their environments, rather than development impact or changes in state (Earl, Carden and Smutylo, 2001). The approach does not belittle changes in state, but argues that for each change in development situations there are corresponding changes in behaviour. It therefore aims to supplement traditional evaluation methodologies rather than replace them.

The Communication for Social Change (CFSC) evaluation model (Figueroa *et al,* 2002; Byrne, 2005) aims to assess communication outcomes in areas like community dialogue, leadership, degree and equity of participation, information equity, collective self-efficacy, sense of ownership, social cohesion and social norms. Together, the model maintains, such outcomes determine a community's capacity for cooperative action.

The importance of participation is highlighted by De Jong (2003) who maintains that civil society involvement is essential in water management to prevent community and international conflict. However, advocacy campaigns have focused on "the professional and global bureaucracy levels" and have made few links with social movements and organisations (p 1).

Schilderman (2002, p 46) believes participatory impact assessment should consider:

- processes of information production
- whether two-way communication has been established
- whether local knowledge and demands have been taken into account in policies and programmes targeted at specific groups

Despite growing recognition of their potential benefits, participatory research methods are still not frequently used and have been subject to criticism (Mefalopulos, 2003, pp 38-41; White and Pettit, 2004, pp 16-18). For example, critiques that draw on the Foucauldian notion of "governmentality" have highlighted the danger of co-opting participants into development agendas set by the powerful (ECDPM, 2002, p 9). Others maintain that the financial, time and human resource intensities of participatory approaches make them impractical. Many practitioners agree that it is difficult to ensure that the potential benefits of a participatory approach are realised in practice.

Ascroft and Masilela (1994, p 281) believe few people understand the implications of participation in development, because "few, very few, have ever been directly involved in projects in which theirs was the task of operationalizing the concept and implementing it in real life situations". How, for instance, are individuals encouraged to participate in HIV prevention strategies and evaluation in contexts where HIV and AIDS are stigmatised, cultural factors prevent people from talking about sex or leaders deny that HIV causes AIDS?

Kelly and Van Der Riet (2000, pp 26-31) offer insight into some of the practical problems and challenges of applying the participatory research paradigm in southern African community settings. Mefalopulos's study of the theory and practice of participatory communication is significant precisely because it "tries to bridge the academic perspective of participatory communication with the practical aspects encountered in the field".

A series of seminars to explore the involvement of health and social service users in research and peer review illustrates some practical challenges in participatory approaches. These include (Hanley, 2005, pp viii - ix):

- the way research is funded has important implications for empowerment and participation
- complex methodologies do not lend themselves to user involvement, and limited time and support is available to train and mentor service uses who become involved in research
- service users and researchers may have different expectations of or purposes for research
- the evidence base for the effectiveness of user involvement as partners in research is “very poor”
- practical and power issues prevent service users from participating in peer review of research proposals and reports

Spilka (2003/4, p 6) believes evaluators are paying greater attention to outcomes in community-based work but are only slowly translating this into better practice. Of particular concern to him are unrealistic expectations of the development outcomes communities can achieve within funding and programme timeframes. He argues that “being realistic about outcomes and measuring them effectively remain challenges” (p 7).

Cornwall and Gaventa (2000, p 3) note growing concern with “citizen engagement in policy formation and implementation”. They explore the implications of a shift from perceiving people as clients or consumers of social policies (“users and choosers”) to seeing citizens as agents who may become actively engaged in “making and shaping” social policies that affect them. Current realities offer new spaces and new constraints for participation, and notions of participation should “encompass the multiple dimensions of citizenship” - social and political rights, responsibilities and accountability (p 17). New forms of citizen-state interaction may present new opportunities for citizen action, but “they may also carry the risks of co-optation, misuse, and legitimation of social exclusion”.

In a three-year action research study around "people-centred advocacy", Chapman *et al* (2005, p 2) found that "what people believed or assumed to be true about power, gender and social change influenced strategies and chances of success. Yet these beliefs and assumptions usually remained unexamined." The authors argue that people need to understand social change, power and gender – and their implications for action – before they can effectively plan and review work to support the empowerment and leadership of the poor and marginalised.

There is clearly much scope for debates around participatory approaches, the development of methodologies and the sharing of experience in diverse contexts. Kelly and Van Der Riet (2000, p 32) maintain that the participatory paradigm challenges researchers to "rethink their motives for doing research and to adopt a more needs-driven and problem-orientated approach". The literature also suggests that the quality of evaluation findings and the use of evidence in development processes could significantly be improved. Participatory methodologies may enhance the validity and legitimacy of evaluation findings. Their credibility is vital, particularly if research is to influence policy (Pollard and Court, 2005; Stone *et al*, 2001).

2.9. Influencing policy

As development communicators recognise that evaluation's value can extend beyond short-term funding and project cycles, some are exploring ways for evaluation processes and findings to better support long-term, integrated development. Rigorous analysis of context, process and outcomes may suggest how evaluation findings could be used to influence policy cycles and thereby promote systemic change.

Stone *et al* (2001, pp 29-30) observe that the policy relevance, utility and influence of campaign evaluation findings is difficult to determine and problematic. For instance, a campaign may have a significant effect on the media, but little or none on the policy cycle. However, while "the impact of research on policy is uncertain and contingent on social and political

context" (p 2), reflecting on the policy impact of research findings can lead to the development of innovative programmes (p 27).

White and Pettit (2004, p 19) maintain that there are still "significant institutional barriers" to the use of participatory research findings (micro-level qualitative data) at the macro level. They cite Brock (1999, p 4) who believes this is perhaps partly due to "the absence of relationships between micro and macro institutions in the policy process".

Pollard and Court (2005) contend that policy context and relationships among policy makers affects the extent to which civil society organisations can use evidence to influence pro-poor development policy. They argue that if research is to influence policy then evidence needs to be rigorous, relevant, appropriate, timely and accessible. Furthermore, evaluators need to successfully feed findings into policy networks, with issues or "policy narratives" framed in informative and inspiring ways, using appropriate terminology.

Kuruvilla (2005, pp v, 7, 12-13) observes how framing evaluation findings - in scientific, technical, ideological, procedural, moral, political or economic terms, for example - can influence socio-political discourse. As the mass media often set public agendas and frame issues in ways that can influence policy, she argues that civil society organisations need to be "media savvy" (p vi).

Hemsley-Brown (2004) finds a number of barriers to the use of evaluation findings by public and development managers, including: limited access to and relevance of research; lack of trust and credibility; organisational contexts; and the gap between research and practice. She believes research use could be facilitated through support and training, collaboration and partnership, dissemination strategies, networks, and strong leadership.

However, Kuruvilla maintains "it is not clear how and to what extent interactions of state and civil society actually lead to better policies and services" (p 4). She believes the lack of systematic evaluation is a major barrier to understanding how civil society can participate in research and policy processes, and ascribes inadequate assessment to short-term

funding cycles, and the problems in attributing causality in research, policy and social change to a single process or actor.

Kuruvilla also notes that “despite strong imperatives” and some successful examples of civil society participation in health research and policy there are “growing concerns about the nature, costs and effects of these initiatives; evaluation criteria, explanatory principles and empirical data on participation initiatives are hard to come by” (pp v, 3-4).

Covey (1994, cited in Chapman and Wameyo, 2001, p 7) argues that short-term trade-offs may need to be made between policy gains and strengthening community organisations. For example, lobbying may need to proceed ahead of grassroots education and participation, or grassroots strategies may frame issues in a way that slows policy change processes. Evaluation can achieve positive policy and civil society outcomes, but this is only likely when both are explicit objectives, appropriate stakeholders participate and the initiative is adequately resourced.

Agencies in the British Overseas Aid Group (BOAG) note major challenges in evaluating the performance of advocacy campaigns (Charlish *et al*, 2003, pp 9-12). These include assessing their influence on governments and institutions at the international level, and the quality of dialogue and consultation with groups excluded from policy-making processes.

Chapman *et al* (2005, p 3) stress that campaign strategies and resources that focus exclusively on “the most visible aspects of power – law and policymaking” are not sufficient. Other aspects of power and the empowerment of marginalised groups in decision-making play a vital role in promoting and sustaining advocacy gains. The voices of social movements and community-based organisations also need to be heard and included in agenda-setting for development. The authors argue that “professionalisation” has contributed to a “depoliticisation” of advocacy work by “marginalising the poor from the process and sidelining efforts to transform power relations beyond policy change”.

For this reason, Jackson and Kassam (1998, p 5) maintain that “a bias must be built into the participatory evaluation process in favour of the poorest interests and their allies. The powerful and elites can participate, but their voices cannot be permitted to dominate.”

Usdin, Christophides, Malepe and Maker (2000) document lessons from an advocacy campaign to ensure the effective implementation of South Africa’s Domestic Violence Act. These include the importance of building coalitions to draw on diverse strengths, using a combination of advocacy tools to achieve objectives and “the important role of policy advocates in connecting the multiple streams at play in the policy and legislative arena” (p 56).

For some campaign evaluations it may be necessary, as Kuruvilla (2005, pp v and 9) argues for pro-poor policy to go beyond traditional scientific evaluation criteria to “determine consciousness about inequalities and injustices, representations of the perspectives of the less powerful, clear historical and values contexts, and consequential validity of the research”. She cautions researchers to “avoid ‘development ventriloquism’ wherein experts, based on their own research objectives, frame the thoughts and words of individuals and communities in disadvantaged situations”.

The literature suggests that evaluation findings may have many uses, each of which presents additional challenges for communicators and evaluators. For instance, findings may be used to spur debate on policy options, help create receptive environments for policy implementation, build awareness of barriers to development, strengthen inter-sectoral alliances, and demand resources necessary to effect sustainable policy outcomes.

However, Rist (2003/4, p 5) cautions that new realities demand a different conceptualisation of “evaluation utilization”. He believes evaluation debates have neglected “fundamental changes in the intellectual landscape of public management, organizational theory, information technology, and knowledge management”. For instance, the spread of

information and communications technologies (ICTs) means “users of evaluative knowledge are now confronted with growing rivers of information and analysis … from the public, private and nonprofit sectors across the globe”. This, Rist contends, is rapidly diminishing the value of individual evaluations for governments, civil societies and policy-makers who need to apply greater selectivity to huge volumes of information.

The policy arena rapidly changes and evaluation findings may face vigorous opposition or complete indifference. Policy victories may be difficult to effect or claim, which makes the sustainable outcomes of the campaign evaluation process all the more important.

2.10. Conclusion

The themes outlined above indicate the complex, interconnected and dynamic nature of issues around campaign evaluation and development. They also suggest there is considerable scope for evaluation to help build the discipline and efficacy of development communication.

The following section explores these themes to identify opportunities for evaluation to contribute towards greater campaign efficacy and sustainable development outcomes.

CHAPTER 3: REFLECTION ON THE THEMES

The themes that arise in this exploratory review give cause for both optimism and concern. On the one hand, a number of individuals and organisations are breaking new ground to enhance the development value of campaign evaluation. Simultaneously, however, inappropriate paradigms, inadequate tools and resource constraints mean evaluators miss many opportunities for their work to constructively support social change.

The following sections consider some of campaign evaluation's current challenges, dilemmas and opportunities, as suggested by the conceptual themes that emerged in the literature. This analysis is not conclusive, but rather indicates the kind of reflection and debate that is needed to clarify evaluation's potential role, support appropriate human resource development and encourage optimally constructive campaign evaluation.

3.1. Evaluation's purpose and scope

Campaign evaluation may be seen as a development intervention itself, with the potential to influence change at many levels and in different spheres. This implies that the traditional research paradigm, in which evaluation remains separate from the campaign, be opened up to new possibilities for integrated, collaborative learning and change. As in other development initiatives, those responsible for strategy and implementation are ultimately accountable for the resources evaluation processes use and the public value they deliver.

The conventional evaluation paradigm tends to see issues of transparency, accountability, effectiveness and learning from a narrow funder perspective. However, experience suggests that constructive evaluations are embedded, from the outset, in a larger development context and this perspective informs their scope and purpose (See, for example, Scalway, 2003).

Southern African development challenges demand extraordinary boldness, collaboration and innovation to ensure better futures for the

region's people. Thorough analysis of the diverse needs of social groups, communities and individuals, and a broad, critical perspective of social, political and economic realities are necessary to ensure that initiatives achieve optimal impact.

New approaches to campaign evaluation expand its scope and purpose from standard funder-specified assessments to broader analyses that accommodate other stakeholder interests and long-term development intentions. From attempts to objectively quantify final campaign outcomes, evaluations increasingly include mixed-methods research and analysis at all stages of the initiative. More evaluation processes and decision-making now involve diverse stakeholder groups. Richer impact parameters allow evaluation to answer more significant questions and note more campaign consequences at individual, community and policy levels.

If campaign evaluation is to support the removal of systemic and structural constraints to development, it needs to harness communication's emancipatory potential. This implies that evaluation processes should actively involve stakeholders in dialogue so that learning and findings can empower people to improve their own lives.

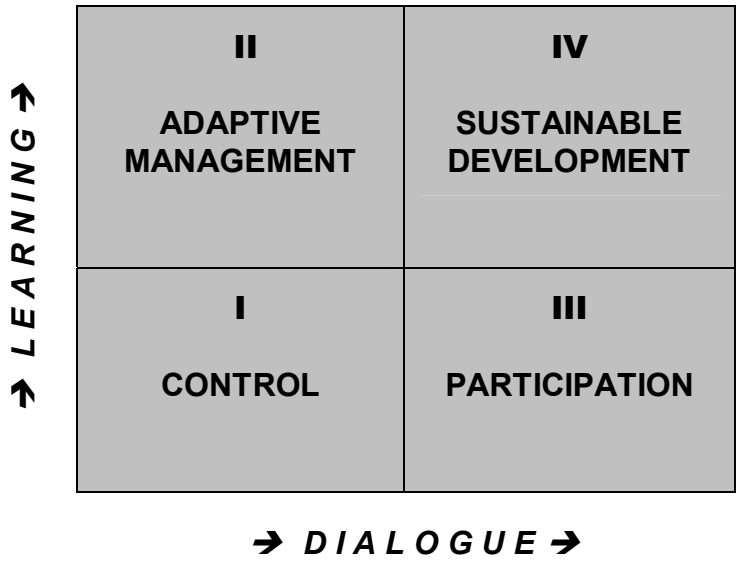
Paolo Freire (1970/1996, pp 68-69) argues that 'dialogue' has two essential dimensions: reflection and action. If one element is missing then the other is compromised and the transformative potential of dialogue is lost. Without action, words become mere verbalism or empty rhetoric. Without reflection, words become pointless activism or action for action's sake. Significantly, Freire believes that dialogue cannot exist without love for the world and for people, humility, faith in humankind to create and transform, mutual trust, hope and critical thinking (pp 70-74).

In this light, it appears that the absence of true dialogue undermines many development communication campaigns and their constructive assessment. If evaluation processes are not orientated towards transformation, emancipation and self-correction, they will probably not empower people to change their reality through reflection and action.

Broadening the scope and purpose of evaluation to enhance collective learning and dialogue may imply trade-offs, more complex processes and less uncertainty of outcomes. This is illustrated in Figure 2, below (adapted from Engel, Carlsson and Van Zee, 2003, p 3).

Each quadrant represents a different purpose of evaluation. A shift from quadrant one (control) to the others (adaptive management, participation and sustainable development) requires rigorous strategic planning, and careful balancing of interests and resources.

Figure 2. Shifting intentions of campaign evaluation



The figure suggests that evaluation processes need to facilitate dialogue and empower stakeholders to participate in development initiatives. If campaign learning and findings are not widely shared, their benefits are confined to "adaptive management". However, through dialogue and participation, collaborative learning from evaluation promises more sustainable development outcomes.

Arguably, campaigns have failed to make significant development impact in southern Africa partly because of inappropriate communication paradigms - the failure in theory and practice to recognise the importance of dialogue in developing contexts. Evaluation has a role to play in

facilitating reflection, learning and action. It can support communication between development institutions and development subjects, and help build coalitions to draw on the diverse strengths of macro and micro development organisations. It can create opportunities for self-regulatory or self-correcting action at every level.

If campaign evaluation is to support sustainable development, its scope and purpose need to be seen as part of larger, incremental processes towards a better future. Long-term benefits manifest in the outcomes of many initiatives, driven by diverse development actors. They result from the removal of barriers that prevent people from achieving their potential in all spheres of life. Sustainable development is an ongoing process to balance economic, ecological and social systems. It is people-centred, culturally appropriate and rights-based.

Organisations at every level need to understand how their own evaluation systems can inform the effectiveness of future campaigns and contribute to broader development initiatives. Conceptual clarity - to confirm campaign ideals, principles, beliefs and values – may help evaluation participants to focus on the achievement of meaningful development outcomes, particularly if stakeholders collectively define and understand the intentions and possibilities of evaluation as collaborative processes of learning and dialogue. However, the task of translating even sound theoretical frameworks into sustainable development outcomes should not be underestimated. Even with clearly defined parameters and priorities, it is a considerable challenge for campaign evaluation to maintain support and achieve results.

Many development communicators recognise the need to develop methodologies and capacities to accommodate evaluation’s new scope and purpose. Better tools will not enhance evaluation’s value if they are not applied with an understanding of development contexts and of how multiple factors interact to affect people’s actions and wellbeing.

Importantly, if campaign evaluation is to fulfil the promise of broader development scope and purpose, a new performance culture is needed. It should allow all stakeholders to regard assessment as a tool for learning, self-corrective action, empowerment and sustainable development, rather than as an authoritarian control mechanism.

To optimise the development value of campaign evaluation, diverse disciplines, sectors and stakeholder groups need to contribute towards and draw from a growing body of knowledge and an expanding skills base. Collective learning, reflection and sharing processes can support the evolution of theory and practice, foster contextual understanding, and help build the technical capabilities and analytical skills required to realise evaluation's constructive potential.

3.2. Knowledge and skills

In southern Africa, the lack of appropriate knowledge and skills is major impediment to effective, purposeful campaign evaluation - and development communication in general. However, if their role is to be optimally beneficial, campaign evaluators need more than traditional research skills and theoretical knowledge. Some evaluation capacity can be enhanced through systematic training, but much can only be built through experience, reflection and collaborative learning.

On one level, the necessary skills, insights and abilities could be nurtured as part of broader efforts to strengthen public and development management in the region. Where capacity-building is a specific objective of campaign evaluations, it may be tailored to meet the needs of staff members, stakeholder groups and other participants.

Ideally, campaign evaluators should have a combination of knowledge, skills and experience that enables them to:

- understand how campaign evaluation fits into and contributes towards broader development processes
- critically and strategically consider who should evaluate and be evaluated, about and for what, and according to whose criteria

- balance evaluation objectives and procedural complexities with budgetary and capacity constraints
- be sensitive to the multiple effects of campaigns in various spheres (for example, institutional, community, household, political, economic, cultural)
- be aware of power relations and how they affect development processes
- draw lessons from exceptions as well as average tendencies when deciding which campaign elements have worked and which have not
- rigorously scrutinise their own and organisational assumptions
- have a contextual understanding of social and policy processes, and the factors that shape the use of research findings
- be humble and have an open attitude towards people and change, and be willing and able to actively listen

Generally, campaign evaluators appear to draw relatively little from the social sciences, development studies or lessons learned in development practice. Such knowledge could provide a basis for more rigorous research, constructive debate, effective strategy and enhanced public value. Evaluators need to consider how findings may inform decisions in all spheres of development, and ensure data becomes contextually grounded and relevant.

New development approaches assume that programme design, planning and implementation are improved by bringing factual data and stakeholder perspectives to bear on decision-making and problem solving. Such approaches require campaign evaluators to be skilful facilitators who can equitably involve diverse interest groups in collaborative learning and capacity-building processes. They need to create opportunities for skills development, reflection, discussion and self-correction. Too often, reflection and learning are neglected out of complacency, fear of failure, and paradigms that emphasise what can be measured rather than what counts.

3.3. Power and accountability

Development communication is inherently political, yet published campaign evaluations often reflect narrow, depoliticised views of change and lack substantive analysis of power relations. Evaluation processes

frequently lack any means for social empowerment, and findings may not be shared with important stakeholders. Uncritical, exclusive evaluation approaches are particularly evident where campaign accountability is to powerful interest groups, like donors and government bodies, and not to those who most need to benefit from development.

Limited stakeholder involvement and predominantly 'upward' accountability are of concern because they suggest that too many campaign assessments do not adequately question assumptions, challenge power structures or include marginalised groups in decision-making processes. Negative power dynamics and too narrow a focus stifle the potential of campaign evaluation to produce relevant findings, stimulate dialogue and promote social learning.

Evaluators need to be aware of how power dynamics affect outcomes at every level, from political factors to relations in communities and households. They should also consider how their own power, or lack thereof, could compromise the quality of processes and outcomes.

Power dynamics affect the abilities of organisations to set their own campaign agendas, and to foster the critical reflection and openness necessary to plan, assess and learn from campaigns. They can make it difficult for participants to be frank about problems, mistakes and failures. Unresolved power issues may undermine efforts to promote stakeholder empowerment and campaign efficacy through critical analysis and collective learning.

Campaign and evaluation outcomes need to be considered in terms of responsibilities to various stakeholder groups. These include the intended primary beneficiaries of development and funders, who may be taxpayers or donors. Detailed analysis of what works, what does not, and why, needs to be shared to build a body of knowledge, and increase the quality of future inputs and outcomes. This implies a willingness to share power, risk criticism and balance the interests of different stakeholders.

If campaigns are to support sustainable social change, then their evaluation needs to help focus stakeholders on achieving meaningful, long-term outcomes. A critical approach can facilitate this process, because it analyses the causes of development problems. People can then be empowered to collectively remove those obstacles and ensure the wellbeing of current and future generations.

Critical theory suggests that an understanding of power, authority and subjectivity in a particular situation enhances efforts to promote greater equity and wellbeing. A critical perspective on knowledge systems, communication contexts and development processes may allow campaign evaluation to more constructively empower marginalised groups to influence development agendas and outcomes. By questioning underlying frameworks that may undermine campaigns, development communicators could apply new evaluation approaches and techniques to facilitate the participation of diverse groups in defining the path of development, distributing resources and allocating power.

Development processes are never value free and are usually highly politicised. A critical approach to campaign evaluation may help build scholarly enquiry, inclusive dialogue and deeper understanding of the issues. Because campaign evaluation has an inherently normative dimension, it is important for researchers and communicators to critically reflect on how processes and findings may serve different groups – particularly those that are poor and/or marginalised.

Dialogue needs to move beyond theoretical discussions to apply understanding to strategic action and rigorous research to assess how campaigns can optimally promote individual wellbeing, equity and social development. For example, the mainstreaming of issues such as gender and disability in development initiatives affects the way evaluation is planned, designed, implemented and analysed to reduce social inequalities and promote sustainability.

The mainstreaming process involves formulating desegregated questions and indicators from the outset of the campaign to reflect differences and inequalities at all levels and to suggest where problems may need to be addressed. Such indicators draw attention to groups of people who may be excluded from participation, decision-making and access to benefits, and show where there are unexpected outcomes, unmet needs, lack of capacity and development opportunities.

Looking at issues in terms of gender, disability, age or ethnicity, for example, can show how a campaign affects or neglects specific groups and can provide important evidence of its achievements and shortcomings.

Campaigns need not be seen and evaluated as separate initiatives, but as elements of broader development strategies and processes. Although development communicators increasingly acknowledge that communication is linked to economic and political processes in society, campaign evaluation is seldom connected to systemic issues. However, some work is being done to improve communication at a systemic level and this may influence campaign evaluation.

3.4. A paradigm shift

Historically, the modernist development paradigm has dominated development communication and campaign evaluation. Modernist assumptions of social progress and 'the public good' have frequently led to unrealistic expectations of initiatives and processes. With the failure of modernist frameworks to improve the lives of people in developing countries, many have questioned the appropriateness of traditional approaches to deal with realities in such contexts (Pieterse, 1996, p 2). However, even in institutions where the rhetoric of potentially constructive new thinking has been adopted, conventional practice often continues. If campaign evaluation is to support sustainable development, it needs to actively participate in establishing a paradigm shift.

The widespread recognition of the modernist campaign's failure has not resulted in as significant a change in campaign strategies or evaluation

practice as one would expect. Too often people are still seen as passive recipients of information, rather than active agents of their own development. Their rights, knowledge, opinions and contributions are usually not as valued in evaluation processes as those of 'experts' with sophisticated tools. The voices of marginalised groups often remain unheard and have no equity in knowledge production.

For example, the literature suggests growing interest in and recognition of the benefits of participatory campaigns, but there are still relatively few examples of effective participation in evaluation processes. This suggests that the term 'participation' is often interpreted as the involvement of intended 'beneficiaries' in campaign implementation, rather than as empowering processes of horizontal dialogue that must necessarily be incorporated into each stage of the campaign cycle.

Evaluation has the potential to help liberate development thinking by broadening notions and measures of development, and facilitating dialogue, learning and collaboration for sustainable change. New approaches to campaign evaluation are open to indeterminate rather than precise solutions, and to decisions that are rooted in dialogue, experience, practical wisdom and values. Such conceptions of social change acknowledge pluralism, social movements, diversity and subjective realities. They also recognise that social processes and structure can function as mechanisms of exclusion.

Modernist theories seem more assuring as they suggest controllable, predictable, linear progression towards pre-determined outcomes. However, as development practitioners well know, uncertainty is inevitable in social change processes. As Heckscher *et al* (1994, p 30) maintain:

> "In a lengthy change process one can never limit the variation, and one can never be sure of the results … No one really understands what they are moving towards when they start the process. It is a matter of learning something new through practice, of *increasing* the capacity of the system in ways that were incomprehensible in the old order".

Campaign evaluators can accelerate the paradigm shift by questioning assumptions about social coherence and causality in favour of multiplicity, plurality, fragmentation and indeterminacy. They can encourage development practitioners to re-consider how groups of people work together to create their worlds and meaning.

3.5. Inclusive participation

Development requires sustained partnerships among many and diverse individuals, groups and organisations. Dialogue, collaboration, and participation therefore recur in the literature as key elements of successful campaigns and their constructive evaluation. Yet paradigmatic, political and resource constraints often limit the extent and potential benefits of inclusive strategies. Many campaign environments and strategies in southern Africa are still far from being conducive to genuine participatory communication and evaluation.

Inclusive approaches to campaign evaluation draw on the expertise and views of a range of stakeholders. Such input helps to validate or challenge perspectives, and contributes to conclusions and learning. Conflicting interests, power inequities and cultural differences need astute management so that people are motivated to work together to fulfil the purpose of an evaluation and realise the promise of development.

Campaign evaluation that aims to be genuinely participatory faces numerous challenges, but particularly in gaining the acceptance of campaign managers and funders in government or donor agencies. Participatory evaluation may take a longer, more convoluted path to produce findings and it may difficult to convince decision-makers of its potential value. They may even be unwilling to place people's empowerment before short-term political or economic gains. This makes it all the more important to assess and document evaluation processes, and to share experiences and implications of participants' empowerment.

Impact hypotheses are informed by context evaluation and analysis; in turn, they inform the analysis of campaign relevance. They should thus be

formulated and verified by campaign stakeholders, including partners, key actors, and groups whose interests and opinions are often not taken into account. Stakeholders should be involved from the beginning, not only once key decisions have been made. Evaluation findings and learning should be presented to them in an accessible and meaningful way.

Inclusive dialogue may help identify and address structural constraints to development, such as social inequalities. This is an important consideration in southern Africa where contextual factors continue to perpetuate inequalities and undermine efforts for social change. The approaches taken and tools used for campaign evaluation and learning need to capture the diversity and complexity of people's lives in the specific context.

Although gender issues are mentioned in much of the literature, particularly in the context of power relations, and HIV and AIDS, there appears to be inadequate mainstreaming of gender and other marginalised group issues into evaluation frameworks and methodologies. Balit (2001, p 1) notes that "all major development goals … address poverty alleviation [and] gender issues and recognize that information and knowledge are essential for achieving these goals". Yet development strategies and communication efforts have failed to improve the conditions of women on a global scale - their status "stands in stark contrast to the attention paid to issues of women and gender in development discourse".

Wilkins (2000, p 201) observes that in development communication:

> "[G]ender appears to operate in a way that essentializes women according to their biological conditions rather than account for their social, political and economic relationships. Moreover, women … tend to be targeted as individual consumers, assuming that they will facilitate social change through their successful purchase of suggested services and products".

In considering the rights of marginalised and disempowered social groups, evaluators need to ask questions like: How have processes excluded people by unintentionally creating or not overcoming their barriers to access and participation? Does the way in which the evaluation is

planned, designed, implemented and analysed contribute towards reducing social inequalities between groups? Has the process positively influenced discriminatory values, attitudes and practices? Has it had desired or undesired effects? Are the results sustainable?

It is important to adapt evaluation frameworks, methodologies and strategies to ensure that they respond to the needs and issues of vulnerable groups like women, people with disabilities, elderly people, children and ethnic minorities. Lessons learned about campaign effects on these groups need to be highlighted in reports and recommendations, and shared to promote inclusive policy and practice. Not only are sensitive indicators needed, but representative organisations and individuals need to be involved in research, planning, implementation and evaluation.

3.6. Pioneers

Much can be learned from the campaign evaluation experiences of others, and from comparative analysis of their theoretical frameworks. The scope of this review does not allow such investigation, but it does point to initiatives that are covering new ground in evaluation thinking and practice. Some focus on policy or legislative change to measure campaign success; others actively seek constructive evaluation approaches that emphasise the empowerment of participants, critical reflection, learning and the incremental removal of barriers to development. There are also those who try to bridge the gap between community-based evaluation and decision-making at the highest levels.

International advocacy groups, in particular, are pioneering new campaign evaluation approaches by building on lessons from decades of community-based development work, social mobilisation and government lobbying. Although NGOs based in the northern hemisphere tend to lead such initiatives, their insights and principles are based on many years of experience in working with partner organisations in the developing world. Importantly, many recognise the need to develop culturally appropriate, gender-sensitive methods; address power imbalances in funder-partner

relationships; and to build the capacity of local NGOs and CBOs so that they can lead their own campaigns. Their evaluation systems emphasise collective reflection and shared learning.

Public health campaigns tend to rigorously evaluate impact with increasingly sophisticated methodologies, but often with restrictive paradigms and narrow criteria. Evaluations may mention contextual factors that threaten to undermine the advances made by a particular campaign, but such observations are not necessarily linked to integrated development strategies to address such threats. Although public health campaigns often need to urgently achieve and demonstrate results, their project-focused evaluation systems are arguably inadequate for assessing outcomes like behaviour change. HIV and AIDS campaigns, in particular, have become increasingly controversial and are often called to account for their high costs while the epidemic continues to devastate southern African communities.

The evaluation approach for the South African health department's "Beyond Awareness" campaign was full of promise, but the communication initiative itself was short-lived. Rather than attempting to assess the 'impact' of short-term campaign modules, evaluation aimed to build understanding of the behaviours and practices that are relevant to HIV and AIDS strategies and communication (Kelly, 2000; Kelly and Parker 2000). The main evaluation study recognised that there are multiple sources of HIV and AIDS information, and therefore considered it "more important to understand the impact of this diversity, than it is to attempt to extract the impact of specific campaigns" (Kelly, 2000, p 1).

The study saw HIV and AIDS behaviour "ultimately as much the product of the 'milling' of ideas within communities and social networks" as the result of public campaigns (Kelly and Parker, 2000, p 6). It also acknowledged the considerable lack of behavioural research in South Africa and limited insight into the sexual behaviours and practices of adolescents and young adults in a range of contexts. The research therefore sought to provide

insights into the direction HIV and AIDS communication and other programmes should take, and to suggest future research directions.

The Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication has demonstrated its commitment to achieving tangible results and working in partnership with other organisations with similar objectives. It has integrated various theoretical and methodological frameworks into a continuously evolving multi-media, education-entertainment, mass communication model. Soul City's evaluations use various methodologies to investigate programme impact on individuals, and how these people then interact with their communities and affect their societal context. Evaluation strategies include national qualitative impact assessments, cost-outcome description, media monitoring and analysis, institutional and organisational impact studies and partnership studies. Lessons learned are frequently shared in diverse forums.

The Internet holds great potential as a means for southern African development communicators to share evaluation findings, learning and thinking. International non-profit Internet-based initiatives provide equitable access to research publications, toolkits and other resources, and a number of online toolkits and resource lists provide accessible introductions to campaign evaluation. (See, for example, http://www.comminit.org and http://www.eldis.org)

The Communication for Social Change Consortium (Parks, Gray-Felder, Hunt and Byrne, 2005) has developed a guide to help evaluate the impact of participatory communication initiatives. It suggests applying the Most Significant Change approach (Davies and Dart, 2005) to involve key stakeholders and better understand what the initiative is achieving. The Health Communication Partnership (2005) provides a "how-to" guide to help mobilise communities for health and social change. Its seven-phase "Community Action Cycle" includes a section titled "Evaluate together" through nine-steps. Johns Hopkins University (2003) provides a resource list for mobilising communities for health and social change.

3.7. Challenges and opportunities

The evaluation of development communications campaigns faces many challenges, some of which cut across the assessment of all development work. At the same time, there is great potential for evaluation to contribute towards meaningful social change. Given the considerable constraints to be overcome in southern African communication contexts, it is important to focus campaign stakeholders on the achievement of sustainable outcomes, while acknowledging and celebrating smaller gains on the way.

3.7.1. Theoretical issues and empirical realities

The first step in addressing evaluation challenges may be to define the meaning and scope of concepts, generally for the development sector and specifically for each campaign. Campaign evaluation and its principles, values and processes need to be defined in a way that enhances research, policy and practice. Common understanding of terms like 'evaluation' and 'participation' and what they may entail could help integrate campaign assessment into broader development processes where its public value may be demonstrated.

Development work is usually complex, inherently political and potentially controversial. It requires courage and deep commitment to persevere with approaches that diverge from dominant paradigms and entrenched systems. Evaluators need to carefully consider the realities of communication contexts, and the implications of applying theories, methodologies and strategies within that reality. Conflict, tension and resistance frequently arise during change processes, and specific skills, attitudes and capacities are needed to constructively deal with such challenges.

In practice, campaigns usually fit into funding and strategic cycles, and are therefore often subject to tight time-frames. Frequently, they are seen as less important or urgent than other development interventions and are implemented almost as afterthoughts. In addition, limited campaign resources mean they are seldom able to achieve the scope and impact required to effect broadly beneficial, sustainable outcomes.

Capacity, time and financial restraints often prevent rigorous evaluation, and the sharing of findings and lessons learned. However, campaign evaluation, whatever its primary purpose and budget, should be seen as part of a larger development context. The learning and social change purposes of evaluation need to be balanced with its control functions. Evaluation parameters are often set before any researchers are commissioned to assess a campaign, which can make it difficult for evaluators to ensure that allocated evaluation resources optimally support processes for sustainable development.

The unpredictable outcomes of campaigns present challenges in securing funding and political support. Decision-makers are often either public officials who need to account for money spent, or development managers who are trained in areas such as accounting, engineering or medicine and therefore need 'scientific proof' that money has been well invested, with only quantitative details of impact and cost/benefit ratios.

In environments where professionals, specialists and managers are often pressed to speedily deliver quick fix solutions and answers, it is vital for campaign evaluators to continuously question assumptions and rationales. They also need to consider numerous questions in the development of theories, methodologies and strategies, such as:

- For whom and for what purposes is the evaluation to be conducted?
- What do stakeholders agree are clear, realistic, necessary, desirable and flexible objectives that incorporate various dimensions of success?
- How can stakeholders at all levels cost-effectively participate in campaign monitoring and evaluation?
- How can issues of power, gender and the rights of marginalised groups be fully addressed in evaluation processes?
- Are there indicators and systems to detect delayed, long-term, indirect and unanticipated campaign effects?
- How can evaluation be used for individual, organisational, community and societal learning?

- Do the methodologies meet stakeholders' development needs?
- Will the process bring together different perspectives, knowledge and energy to collectively create a more powerful agent of change?
- Do partners have mutual and complementary agendas and strategies?
- Is there commitment to and interest in the evaluation function at political, bureaucratic, management and community levels?
- Are there links and channels between evaluators and those who need to use evaluation findings?
- Can the costs of evaluation research be justified and reconciled with budget allocations?

Possibly the greatest challenge is to systematically mainstream communication and its evaluation into southern African development interventions so they are fully integrated into projects, programmes and movements. This will require significant capacity building to ensure that strategies and processes empower people to fully participate in promoting the development of their own societies.

Given the multiple constraints and inevitable power inequalities in development contexts, theoretical notions of optimally constructive campaign evaluation may be impossible to achieve. Evaluators need to be realistic, but value even small contributions to long-term development outcomes. They need to remain sensitive to complex issues, account for them and minimise their negative effects where possible.

3.7.2. Information and communication technologies

Rapid developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs) present new opportunities for campaign evaluation, from facilitating knowledge management to encouraging dialogue amongst stakeholders. However, harnessing technological power does not automatically translate into effective evaluation or development benefits. Appropriate evaluation approaches are still required to optimise strategies to promote, for example, accountability, participation, learning, collaboration, social mobilisation and policy influence.

Evaluators need to understand how different stakeholder groups respond to new technologies, so that ICTs can be effectively used to engage people in assessment and development processes. Importantly, the use of technology should not be allowed to reinforce or exacerbate existing inequalities, or exclude social groups from participation. Given the limited communication infrastructure in many southern African contexts, ICTs often need to complement more traditional interpersonal communication channels, which may be more appropriate for dialogue, information.

Generally, ICTs present opportunities for collaborative networks, alliances and coalitions to bring together the strengths, influences and resources of diverse groups. They could support efforts to share learning, build knowledge, synergise strategies and help correct power imbalances. They may help extend campaign evaluation's role beyond retrospective assessment and narrow accountability to include human resource development, management capacity building, advocacy, social mobilisation, policy influence, fundraising and greater stakeholder support to achieve development objectives.

However, such technology is merely a tool that needs to be skilfully employed to effectively communicate campaign evaluation findings, facilitate dialogue, contribute to evidence-based policy processes and increase shared understanding of development issues.

3.8. Knowledge gaps

Diverse, dynamic development contexts and rapid changes in the communications field raise many questions for campaign evaluation. Further examination of the practical application of evaluation theories and methodologies may suggest how different theoretical approaches enhance or impede development processes. Such inquiry may also indicate what kind of evaluation resources and capacities are required at each stage of a particular approach; how learning can feed into and out of various campaign phases; and how stakeholder involvement can promote development outcomes.

Future research could examine the extent to which campaign evaluation strategies have adopted the rhetoric of participatory approaches *and* translated paradigm into practice. Have participatory evaluation methodologies empowered historically marginalised groups in decision-making processes? What are the major constraints to inclusive participation in campaigns and their evaluation? What are the benefits and disadvantages of participatory evaluation in different campaign contexts? Do more complex and time-consuming participatory evaluation approaches significantly enhance development outcomes? How can participatory-based findings and lessons be fed into strategic processes?

Research could also indicate how certain factors may undermine the development value of campaign evaluation. These may include:

- Political pressure to report visible impact by government campaigns
- Financial pressure to report success to donors
- The long timeframes required for participatory processes to build capacities and produce results
- Lack of understanding of the concept and benefits of participatory evaluation

If, as this conceptual review suggests, campaign evaluation can support governance and empowerment processes, then further research may suggest how campaign evaluation could enhance the development and functions of policy and social networks or other platforms of broad engagement. It may reveal how organisations and networks use evidence from campaign evaluation to influence policy, promote accountability and build bodies of knowledge. It may also help build understanding of how to mainstream gender, disability and other social issues into evaluation frameworks.

Above all, campaign evaluators need to continuously consider how evaluation, as applied research, can support transformation that is regarded as meaningful by those who most need to improve their wellbeing and in a way that will also benefit future generations.

3.9. Conclusion

These limited reflections on the review's key themes are based on the author's own interpretations, experience, conceptual understandings, and views of development. In themselves, they illustrate the importance of multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral, inclusive forums for debate on how campaign evaluation can support positive social change.

The thinking, knowledge and perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders is vital for the evolution of effective development communication and evaluation models and methodologies, and their successful application to development initiatives.

The following section notes some of the limitations of this review, summarises its findings and suggests an approach with which to take campaign evaluation forward into an optimally constructive development role.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

This conceptual review documents an introductory exploration of campaign evaluation's potential contribution to sustainable development. In particular, it considers how campaign evaluation may help build knowledge, capacity and support for development processes. The review set out to contribute towards the emerging discipline of development communication and, ultimately, more effective campaigns. It has covered a wide range of literature in an attempt to map emerging themes, highlight debates and identify development opportunities in the evaluation of campaigns.

In taking a broad perspective, the research risks being too superficial or general to be of practical value to campaign evaluators who are already pioneering constructive approaches. It may, however, be of interest to those unaware of alternative evaluation paradigms, or who need to justify new assessment models with potentially greater development value.

The review does not focus on the evaluation of a specific type of development campaign; nor does it point practitioners towards 'best practice' and specific evaluation tools. Rather, it has sought to encourage reflection and debate on theory and practice for a variety of communication assessment purposes.

The report notes various ways in which campaign evaluation may support social change, and identifies possible constraints to the assessment of development communication initiatives. It does not do justice to the many existing frameworks, methodologies and tools that may facilitate constructive evaluation; nor does it sufficiently acknowledge cases of progressive evaluation practice in southern Africa.

The review has not allowed adequate exploration of southern African evaluation contexts. However, it may encourage campaign evaluators to expand the purpose and scope of their work in the region. Although the discussion has largely focused on macro-level systemic change, the participation of micro- and meso-level organisations is vital for development.

Some of review's findings and reflections on these themes are highlighted in sections 4.1. and 4.2. below.

4.1. A conceptual overview

The literature indicates growing recognition of the potential development value of both communication and evaluation. However, this awareness has yet to translate into optimally constructive campaign evaluation on a significant scale. While an increasing number of *campaigns* are evaluated in terms of their development objectives, relatively few *evaluations* are assessed in terms of their own development value.

Generally, the disappointing outcomes of many campaigns, and the failure to effectively learn from and use evaluation findings, appears to not merely be a matter of inadequate funding. It also seems to be due to a lack of awareness, knowledge, experience, capacity and political will. In particular, campaign accountability to funders, rather than to those who most need to benefit from campaigns, could undermine evaluation's development benefits.

Campaign evaluation currently takes place within contexts and paradigms that place considerable constraints on assessment processes and severely limit their sustainable benefits. The literature suggests that to enhance the development value of campaign evaluation decision-makers need to consider how:

- the evaluation process is embedded in a larger context
- participation by stakeholders, particularly marginalised groups, may stimulate dialogue and empower people to take constructive action
- coalitions or partnerships with other organisations may broaden the scope and increase the momentum for positive social change
- power structures and power relations may undermine evaluation's positive potential
- processes of critical analysis, reflection, collaborative learning, capacity-building, communication and policy influence may be strengthened

Often, evaluation parameters are set long before any attempts are made to assess campaign processes and outcomes. The literature highlights the importance of integrated, collaborative and inclusive development processes, and strategies that are firmly rooted in political, cultural and historical contexts. It suggests that the over-riding purpose of campaign evaluation could be *emancipation* - through critical reflection, collective learning and progressive action - rather than narrow control through 'upward' accountability.

In some instances, organisations have taken the first steps towards expanding the traditional scope and purpose of campaign evaluation. However, many remain trapped in old thinking and systems with empty rhetoric. Generally, few campaigns provide systematic and credible empirical evidence of any long-term development impact communication has had.

Campaign evaluation studies frequently lack the multidisciplinary rigour required to frame, capture, interpret and analyse the impact of communication on systems, processes and social dynamics. "Impact" is gauged in narrow terms with apparently little sense of the complex interplay between campaign elements and other factors in specific contexts. "Target audiences" are frequently seen as homogenous entities and there seems to be little appreciation of the complex ways in which communities arrange and organise themselves, and influence the behaviours of individuals and households. There appear to be few attempts to locate campaign impact within the contexts that determine how power resources and opportunities are distributed in society.

4.2. The way forward

If campaign evaluation is to play a constructive role in development, it needs to be an integral part of processes to support social dialogue and change. A radically new approach is called for – one that draws from a critical understanding of social and political systems, development paradigms, and communication models. Broad collaboration and normative

frameworks could challenge existing thinking and suggest how evaluation may help promote positive, sustainable development in specific contexts.

Limited perspectives of evaluation stunt our understandings of development, and perpetuate distortions of policy and programme responses to social problems. Theories and conceptual frameworks present tools with which to consider alternative practices, question assumptions and develop new approaches in the quest for social progress. They may shed light on why and how the potentially supportive role of development communication is curtailed.

Sophisticated frameworks, methods and tools may be useful, but people need abilities and skills to effectively use them. Given that campaign impact analysis can be extremely complex and resource intensive, some initiatives may adopt simple monitoring procedures to register effects that could promote learning for long-term social change. As ActionAid (2004) notes, often the most basic and useful tools – such as the skilful use of questioning and listening - are overlooked in our search for new evaluation methods.

Without empowering, holistic development processes, counter forces rapidly undermine any short-term gains achieved by campaigns. Top-down dissemination of information, and dialogue that is the exclusive domain of professional and political elites, do not support sustainable development. However, challenging power inequalities and entrenched privilege often leads to conflict and should therefore involve careful planning.

Central to effective people-centred evaluation strategies is recognition that stand-alone, one-off projects will not overcome obstacles to development. Only integrated, inclusive, transparent and broadly accountable initiatives will achieve long-term sustainable changes. This requires deeper understanding of how social change occurs in different contexts and how planning, reflection and learning can better support the changes communities seek.

No universal laws, objective realities and independent variables will predict or control the outcomes of campaigns or their evaluation. Static theories - particularly those that formulate linear progression towards desired

endpoints - have limited scope in achieving sustainable outcomes. When selecting frameworks, models and principles for evaluation, practitioners need to be critical, realistic and creative. They should not blindly follow dominant thinking or practice, when tools and solutions need to be grounded in local realities. For each campaign, decision-makers need to agree on what emphasis to place on evaluation. This means balancing the potential development value of different approaches with available resources. Evaluation is not inherently constructive; nor can it necessarily find clear answers to all questions.

There may be ways to cost-effectively include additional evaluation objectives and processes that promote empowering and inclusive outcomes. The process for 'constructive' evaluation will differ from one campaign to another, and each situation requires its own appropriate approach. Each campaign evaluation may require a unique synthesis of multidisciplinary principles, models, mechanisms and measures.

It is one thing to highlight the potential of constructive approaches, but quite another to realise their promise of sustainable development benefits. However, much can be learned from the experiences of others and there remains considerable scope to develop frameworks and tools to guide campaign evaluation. This will require extensive collaboration, capacity building, and a commitment to long-term, sustainable development.

Development communicators and campaign evaluators thus need to remain focused on a common vision for a better world; critical in their approaches; and inspired by the potential capacities, creativity, insight and experiences of a diverse range of actors. They need to be open to unexpected outcomes and see them as learning opportunities.

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