'MONOLOGUE OR DIALOGUE:
CHALLENGES OF COMMUNICATION
IN LATIN AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT WORK'

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Abstract

Around the world, an estimated 1.3 billion people live in absolute poverty.[1] To address the needs of these individuals, development practitioners, scholars and non-profit organisations devote extensive time and efforts to research, policy formation, and implementation of projects with the goal of improving the standard of living of impoverished peoples. Communication is one tool that is used in these development initiatives, and is increasingly being recognised as an essential element in effective development programming. Despite such recognition, what is understood as 'communication' and how it should be applied often remains unclear.

This study articulates the importance of interpersonal communication and dialogue in development work, outlining challenges and providing suggestions for improvement. Listening to the voice of the people, ensuring active participation, and engaging individuals to create significant relationships are essential in effectively tackling development problems. However, numerous difficulties emerge at the interpersonal level. This study examines some of the challenges faced by practitioners in Latin American development work, utilising independent research and focusing on the Brazilian non-governmental organisation (NGO), Thydêwas, to illustrate the point.

Research findings focus on six main challenges that influence the dialogue process. Those include the language and comprehension of meanings between interlocutors, differences in ideology and vision of the world, cultural aspects, the context of each interaction, the notion of 'community' in Latin America and the (im)balance of power during the interaction. These challenges are interconnected and a holistic approach is necessary to examine the dynamic process of dialoguing. Results of the study reveal that: misunderstandings due to lack of clarity or transparency may occur; previous experiences of both practitioners and indigenous communities create expectations; and interest and mutual respect between interlocutors is essential to genuine dialogue. Recommendations are made with a focus on improving dialogue and *horizontal* communication between development practitioners and people in the communities where development projects are implemented. They include, among others, the use of the negotiation of meanings' technique, the implementation of adequate intercultural

[1] Estimation Year 2006, The Rome Consensus, WCCD (2006)

trainings and preparation, the allocation of more time for interaction in the field and the recruitment of local people to act as intermediaries.

While intended as an academic piece of work in the field of Intercultural Communication, this thesis may also be of use to field-based development practitioners, coordinators of development communication projects, and those who desire to integrate a more participative approach into their programming. Development Communication and Intercultural Communication are two fields of studies that are intrinsically connected. This study combines theories from both fields in order to explore how effective communication can help development projects to be more effective and sustainable.

Chapter One serves to orient the reader by providing theoretical background about development and communication, particularly the concepts of 'participatory development communication' and 'empowerment'. It discusses the different uses of the term 'communication' in development work and emphasises 'dialogue' as a dynamic process.

Chapter Two examines development communication in practice. It describes the methodology used in this study and argues the importance of dialogue during the entire project cycle, especially in the first phase. This is discussed and presented through the case study of a project run by the NGO Thydêwas with indigenous people in Brazil.

Chapter Three analyses the main challenges for dialogue between development practitioners and communities, using information gathered from Latin American professionals and indigenous peoples involved in development projects. Main difficulties are discussed and analysed. Using the author's independent research as a base, this chapter provides reflections on communication, intercultural exchanges and development work.

Acronyms

CFSC	Communication For Social Change
CMC	Community Multimedia Centre
CAN	Communication Needs Assessment
DevCom	Development Communication
FAO	Food and Alimentation United Nations Organisation
FUNAI	Fundação Nacional do Índio (Brazilian National Foundation of the Indian)
IC	Intercultural Communication
ICC	Intercultural Communication Competence
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
LAR	Latin American Region
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PDI	Power Distance Index
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WCCD	World Congress on Communication for Development
WHO	World Health Organisation

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Introduction

The overall aim of development work is to improve the lives of the individuals and communities in need. Development projects are varied, including those that aim to diminish poverty, create new opportunities, increase citizen participation, and strengthen knowledge and capacities in critical areas such as HIV prevention, environmental issues, malnutrition, education and adult literacy, security, gender imbalance and family planning. Communication plays a decisive role in human development and as such is a vital aspect of effective development work. Projects that link the two fields are labelled as 'Development Communication' or 'Communication for Development' projects. By facilitating interaction of individuals and communities around a common problem or objective, communication activities aim to empower communities to design local solutions to those issues, giving them a voice in the development process and ensuring that their rights are protected.

This study illustrates the significance of communication for development projects in Latin America. Working as a 'communicator' in the field of development is not an easy task. The challenges that emerge often depend upon the particular project and the context in which it runs. It is in interacting with individuals in a field-based environment, that the importance as well as the difficulties of face-to-face communication is best understood. The objectives of this study are (1) to explore the significance of dialogue and participatory communication in development, (2) examine, analyse and discuss some of the limitations of dialogue and (3) reflect upon ways to improve dialogue and encourage participatory communication in development.

Although use of participatory approaches facilitated by structured communication processes have become more frequent in development projects, communication 'mistakes' are still made.[2] Despite legitimate, good intentions to improve the lives of impoverished peoples, vast budgets are sometimes spent on development projects that may not bring about the desired kind of 'improvement'. Evaluations of past projects have shown problems resulting from such misdirected efforts including water pumps without water, hospitals without health staff, schools without teachers and books, computers without electricity, etc. These problems can be

[2] What Gumucio Dagron (2004) calls 'The cemetery of development'
In an international conference about the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), Gumucio Dagron also refers to the development workers as the 'White elephants' in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
See www.communicationforsocialchange.org

the result of many factors, including lack of dialogue with community members, poor communication between development practitioners and local government and lack of understanding of the local context. The aim of this study is to understand the reasons why such mistakes exist, analysing the elements of communication involved. Rather than merely confirming the need for dialogue, this study investigates dialogue as a complex process in the context of development.

While exploring the role of communication in Latin American development work, the study is driven by two main research questions:

- What are the challenges for dialogue between local communities and development practitioners?
- How can dialogue between them be improved?

To respond to these issues and orientate the field of research, the following hypothesis is made: Despite the evolution of the role of communication in development and best efforts made by practitioners, when real dialogue with communities is to be achieved in practice, numerous challenges, visible and less evident ones, emerge. These less visible difficulties may influence the dialogue, limit a participatory approach, and have an unforeseen impact on project results. However, certain issues can be eliminated, or at least reduced in order to improve participatory development communication; and methods can be applied to anticipate problems, even if issues cannot be fully avoided. Concepts and theories of the Intercultural Communication field can be combined with those of Development Communication to ensure that effective communication helps development programmes to be more effectively implemented and long-term poverty reduction goals to be achieved.

While providing some theoretical and historical background, the first chapter explores key concepts and the significance of communication in development work. It delineates the confusion in terminology and discusses participatory development concepts. The second chapter focuses on communication and participation in-practice and analyses a communication project run by a Brazilian NGO in indigenous communities in north-eastern Brazil. The third chapter analyses and discusses the results of the research and examines some suggestions to anticipate difficulties. The chapter is structured according to a number of themes determined throughout the research in order to give a structure to the argumentation. It is necessary to bear in mind that the chosen structure does not rank the challenges in terms of priority or relevance.

1. What Communication for What Development?

This chapter begins by exploring the field of Development Communication and discussing key concepts. As it is often the case in interdisciplinary fields, terminology is ambiguous and varies according to different texts, contexts, scholars and practitioners. This chapter examines some theoretical and historical elements about the field and aims to reach a common understanding of communication and its role in development.

1.1 Development Communication

In development work, the term *communication* is unclear. On the whole, in the development sector, communication still suggests the use of media, i.e. information dissemination activities. Fraser and Villet (1994) stress that communication is 'still confused with advertising or even propaganda efforts' (Fraser and Villet, 1994).[3] A clear distinction has to be made between the two main ways of considering communication in the area of development, as shown in the following figure:

Figure 1: Author's interpretation of the term communication as used in the development field

- Communication as a *tool*: referring to the use of media and programmes, printed materials, educational videos and audio recordings, new ICTs, traditional media tools such as theatre or songs. [4]
- Communication as a *process*: interpersonal communication during a development project, face-to-face interaction, generally classified under 'social communication'.

The use of communication *tools* in development does not exclude the fact that communication is a *process* and vice versa. The importance of communication *tools* is recognised in the field of development. These tools, including the media and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), are useful to create exchange, increase access to information and make

[3] This is an online version of the document and the number of the page quoted remains unknown. The full document was retrieved from the FAO website: http://www.fao.org/docrep/t1815e/t1815e03.htm#new

[4] For more information about communication 'tools', see Fraser and Villet (2004), Voces Nuestras (2006:17) or World Bank (2005).

local voices heard. UNESCO defines them as 'important elements for enhancing participation in development processes and contributing to poverty eradication' (UNESCO 34C/5: 179). [5] This study does not question the significance of communication tools in development. However, it stresses that communication cannot be seen *only* as a tool, but also as a social *process*. [6] Quite simply, the goal of this process is to create exchange between people. The starting point for communication is in human interaction and dialogue, a process that requires, at first sight, no tools other than the language. Hamú et al (2004) argue that Development Communication goes beyond the use of tools and serves 'to identify, investigate and analyze needs, risks and problems to be addressed' (Hamú et al, 2004: 25).[7] Despite stressing the significance of face-to-face interaction, this definition does not underline a genuine exchange between people and learning from each other. This element, however, is key. Development Communication is extensively defined in the literature; a clear and common definition of communication and its role in development still remains, however, a concern for scholars and practitioners. The Rome Consensus, established by the World Congress on Communication for Development (WCCD) (2006),[8] agreed 'Communication for Development is a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change. It is not public relations or corporate communication'. [9] This definition is adopted as a working definition for this study in which communication is clearly defined as a *process*, and places emphasis on

[5] ICTs are the newest tools being used by development communicators. Recently, they have opened great possibilities in terms of exchanges between communities and individuals across the world. Internet can link together different community initiatives and contribute to 'breaking the sense of isolation and nurtures the motivation to act' (Bessette, 2004). See also FAO website www.fao.org

[6] See Gumucio Dagron (2006: 2). 'Unfortunately, the principles of communication for social change, based on dialogue and participation, are not well understood by the larger development agencies'. According to Gumucio Dagron (2006), development agencies invest more in information activities than in communication, which confirms the clear confusion mentioned above. At UNESCO for instance, both Communication and Information are part of the same department: CI (see unesco.org).

[7] See also Huesca (2002) who defines and examines the Development Communication field, in Mody and Gudykunst (eds) (2002: 503).

[8] The World Congress on Communication for Development was held in Rome, Italy, October 27, 2006

[9] During the same Congress, some strategic requirements for the field have been agreed. According to the Rome Consensus 2006, those are: - the right to participate in decision making processes that affect their lives
- create opportunities for sharing of knowledge of skills
- ensure access to communication tools so that internal communication is possible within communities and decision makers
- dialogue, debate, engagement
- all kind of communication trends, channels
- approach contextualised within cultures
- people to have their say, to voice their perspectives and to contribute and act on their ideas for improving their situation. WCCD (2006). See also (Eade, 2001:146).

dialogue between people. Terms such as trust, listening and sharing accentuate the actual interaction between persons, which is essential to the scope of this study. Additionally, in this study the term 'Development Communication' is used instead of 'Communication for Development'. Although 'Communication *for* Development' is of current use, it is more likely to be associated with communication in terms of mass media and ICTs, representing tools used *for* development. The field is also often referred to as 'Communication Development', for example by UNESCO, which typically implies the development *of* the communication, and is therefore not fully adequate for this study. [10] Interpersonal level interactions could be called Communication *in* Development, which refers to the actual face-to-face communication between development actors. In this study, the term 'Development Communication' (DevCom) is adopted to refer to communication both *for* and *in* development.[11] This emphasis on interaction with people can be connected to the paradigms of development that are discussed in the following.

1.2 From Modernisation to Alternative Paradigms

Although development can be defined as the improvement of living conditions, it is not clear what 'improvement' stands for, how development should be reached and even less clear how communication can facilitate it. [12] As Servaes (1986) comments, 'There is *no* universal development model; development is an integral, multidimensional and dialectic process that can differ from society to society' (Servaes, 1986: 211). [13] Based on Servaes' statement, it can be argued that there is not one fixed communication model to respond to development issues.

[10] See UNESCO website www.unesco.org and the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) projects.

[11] Focusing on dialogue, some scholars and practitioners opt for the concept 'Communication for Social Change' (CFSC). 'CFSC is a process of public and private dialogue through which people themselves define who they are, what they need and how to get what they need in order to improve their own lives. It utilizes dialogue that leads to collective problem identification, decision making and community-based implementation of solutions to development issues'. In this definition as well as in the working definition adopted for this study, it is accentuated on the fact that communication in development work is 'a social process based on dialogue'. See: http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/mission and Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron (2006) who accepted to participate in this study and is the managing director of the CFSC Consortium.

[12] For a further discussion, see Kim (2005: 563) and the World Bank website www.worldbank.org: 'The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives'. (Mahbub ul Haq, World Bank, 2007)

[13] A figure representing the paradigms of development developed by Servaes can be found in Servaes (1986: 222). This approach can be compared with the one presented by Melkote (2002: 420), where four several ways of thinking are examined: (1) modernisation, (2) critical perspective, (3) liberation or monastic perspectives, in which personal and communal liberation from oppression are perceived as the keys to self-reliance and (4) empowerment. The latter is an alternative paradigm for social change, in a participatory framework.

Shifts in development theory over time reflect changing notions of development and communication. Initially, after World War II, development was considered in terms of 'perceptible, quantitative differences between rich and poor countries' (Servaes, 1986: 205), in which the aim of any society was to become more 'modernised'. This is defined as the 'modernisation paradigm' of development theory. Modernisation is understood as the 'advancement towards a condition corresponding to the industrial capitalist societies of the West' (Smith, 2003). [14] In Kim's perception of this paradigm, 'societies are expected to "earn" socioeconomic standing as well as predicaments, based on what they do and not what they are' (Kim, 2005: 564). Through this paradigm, communication was viewed primarily as technology transfer from the already 'modernised' countries to the less developed countries. [15] This transplantation of modern societies' knowledge to the developing world reflects a vertical approach to development which places the developed world in an intrinsically superior position. In such a model, the use of communication *tools* is accentuated by development practitioners in order to 'help' marginalised communities to achieve modernisation. Notably, it was due to the modernisation paradigm's emphasis on the role of mass media in development that DevCom was recognised as an area of social scientific inquiry in the 1960s.[16]

The capitalist angle of the modernisation approach to development began to be challenged in the 1970s-80s, particularly by Latin American scholars Beltrán (1976, 1980, 1985) and Diaz Bordenave (1977). These scholars criticised modernity theory as an economic and neoliberalist perspective of development, and rejected the universalistic idea that Western modernised societies should be followed as models. [17] They created an intellectual movement focusing on the institutional barriers that maintain inequalities in developing nations and

[14] For a discussion about modernisation see Smith (2003: 44-107) and Eisenstadt (1966)

[15] See also Rogers (1969) and the diffiusion theory in which modernisation is conceived as a process of diffusion whereby individuals move from a traditional way of life to a more complex, more technically developed and more rapidly changing way of life.

[16] In the 1950s - 1960s, many agencies, such as UNESCO, USAID, FAO, UNDP and UNICEF, supported development projects using mass media as facilitators for development, sources and means of communication, information and education, and subsequently promoted communication within the framework of development project implementation. Lerner (1958), Schramm (1963), and Rogers (1962) established the main theories of the dominant DevCom paradigm. On the other hand, Erskine Childers promoted the area of 'Development Support Communication' (DSC) at UNDP, claiming the importance of communication components in all development projects. When Professor Nora Quebral from the Philippines used for the first time the concept of Development Communication later in the 1970s it was meant to designate the processes of transmission and communication of new knowledge related to rural environments. It was then extended to all the fields that aim to improve the living conditions of disadvantaged people. For more history about the DevCom field, see Beltrán (2005), Bessette (2004), Kim (2005), Prieto (2002).

[17] See also Mody and Gudykunst (2002: 420)

defined the modernisation paradigm as 'irrelevant, or even harmful, to the interests of historically nondominant or marginalised groups' (Kim, 2005: 563).[18] This paradigmatic change led to alternative approaches of development, which recognise the importance of giving local people a voice and letting the communities define and decide how to achieve their own development. These alternative approaches encouraged interaction between individuals and a reduction in the verticality in the communication process. The impact of these new theories on DevCom was substantial. Core concepts such as 'participatory communication' and 'empowerment', which will be discussed below, emerged following the theoretical shift away from the modernisation paradigm.

1.3 Participatory Development Communication and Community Empowerment

Alternative development approaches have increasingly gained recognition and it is generally agreed that development should become more *participatory*. [19] Participation, however, requires effective communication, something that can be difficult to achieve in practice. By moving from a top-down model (in which information flows from modernised, advanced societies to impoverished, underdeveloped communities) to a participatory model, more voice is given to local people. Each individual and each group potentially affected by a development program must be given the rights to fully participate in decision making (Kim, 2005). This argument is reinforced by White (1994) who stresses that *'Participation in development* is the conscious decision to reach out to and involve those people that would be most affected by the proposed development program' (White (1994) in Chitnis, 2005: 35). [20] Communication is most often the mode through which participatory development is made possible. The concepts of 'participatory communication' and 'participatory development communication', thus, also emerge. Beyond the involvement highlighted by White (1994), participatory communication is defined as a 'social process in which groups with common interests jointly construct a message oriented toward the improvement of their living conditions and the change of unjust

[18] See also Beltrán (1985)
[19] See UNDP's Human Development Report (1993), 'people's participation is becoming the central issue of our time'

[20] 'The people themselves should change their attitudes and behavioural patterns. It is people who bring about development, and there can be no change for the better without their informed participation, without mobilizing their capacities and energies, and without increasing their knowledge and skills' (Otsyina and Rosenberg, 1997: 89)

social structures' (Mody (1991) in Chitnis, 2005: 35). This definition emphasises the process of communication, not simply the use of communication as a tool. The role of development and communication is not to 'impose' a vision but to enhance dialogue in order to facilitate a common understanding of the reality, objectives and issues. It can thus be argued that participatory development is generated from inside, by people themselves, by their own way of thinking, their capacities and knowledge. Participatory models allow individuals and groups to become active in their own development. [21] When applied to development work, participation can take various forms, primarily divided into two main ways, represented in *Figure 2.*

Figure 2: Author's interpretation of participation in development communication

(1)- Participation reached through development programmes, such as active citizenship

(2)- Participation before, during and after the implementation of activities, such as in decision-making processes

Although they are closely linked, in practice, both types of participation exist and are understood separately by development practitioners. In a participatory approach such as that defined in (1) in *Figure 2*, participation is a long term process that will continue to increase depending upon the effectiveness of development programmes and communication strategies. For example, the creation of a community radio, which promotes freedom of expression and increases access to information, can raise awareness of individual rights and encourage people to take action and participate, as active citizens, in their own development. In this case, media and other communication tools can be part of development programmes and serve not only to disseminate information (through radio), but also to involve people and allow them to become part of their own development process. This participatory process starts with education, providing citizens the tools to critically examine their environment, question their reality and act together for change.

Alternatively, the second interpretation of participation (2) focuses on the contribution of local people during the *project cycle,* especially in the decision-making processes. It is believed that this kind of participation is necessary to ensure that community members feel ownership over

[21] See also Otsyina and Rosenberg (1997) who claim that 'perhaps, it is only through participation that sustainable social change can be achieved' (Otsyina and Rosenberg, 1997: 89)

a project; that they are involved in it and are not merely receiving it. This sense of ownership leads to more active involvement in development projects. Participation, as defined here, depends on the effectiveness of dialogue between development professionals and communities during the project planning and implementation phases. This second use of the concept of participation is the most relevant to this study because it examines the process of dialogue. However, both perspectives of participation are essential to the success of development programmes. Participation, as described first (1) in *Figure 2* will depend on the second process of participation (2). That is, if the aim of a particular project is to increase active participatory citizenship, the given project will reach its objective only if people participated in every stage of a project.

With and through participation in both its senses, a further key concept for this study emerges, that of *empowerment*. Empowerment is 'the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes' (The World Bank, 2007). [22] Individuals and groups in developing nations must be involved in the process of making decision regarding their own development. This is not a decision to be made independently by a centralised authority figure, a foreign government, or even by experts (Kim, 2005). Through involvement in the decision making process, community empowerment is enhanced. Empowerment increases the capacity of community members to do what they aim to do, to reach social changes and become stronger as individuals and as a group. Community empowerment is made possible through a genuine dialogue between communities and development practitioners. Due to the complex nature of social interaction, facilitating effective dialogue can be complex and challenging in practice. The factors and challenges that influence the dialogue process are further analysed in this study. The meaning of the term *dialogue* is a key element of this study, and is defined in the following section.

[22] See The World Bank's website: www.worldbank.org

1.4 Dialogue between Actors

While definitions and usage vary, for the purpose of this study, *dialogue* refers to a process of understanding, sharing and learning. Brazilian educator and dialogic theorist Freire, states, 'Dialogue does not impose, does not manipulate, does not domesticate, does not "sloganize"' (Freire, 1997: 168). Freire argues that human beings are 'essentially communicative creatures' (Freire, 1997: 128) and that dialogue is a relationship created in a particular moment between separate individuals. Dialogue is thus not a discussion or a debate; it is a process that generates trust. Salo-Lee (2006) elaborates saying, 'Dialogue entails openness, empathy and trust. Dialogue both presupposes and creates an atmosphere where understanding can be reached and new ideas emerge' (Salo-Lee, 2006).[23] Notably, Buber emphasises three elements essential to the dialogue process: the awareness that others are unique and whole persons; authenticity in what is said; and respect for others (Buber (-)[24] in Cissna and Anderson, 1998:65). Thus, dialogue is also a process that creates meanings between the Self and the Other. It encourages a new understanding of people.

Importantly, because dialogue is a social process, it is necessary to identify and understand the individuals involved in the interaction. In development, parties are often described as 'stakeholders' or 'actors'. A multitude of people participate directly or indirectly in the processes of development and communication. They are community members, informal (teachers, landlords) and formal leaders, active community groups, international development organisations, NGOs, state organisations, local and regional authorities (municipalities, districts etc), ministries, government technical services, policy makers, cooperatives, field organisations, financial institutions and private companies, local, national and international media, churches, educative centre, universities, donors, and other third parties. All of them have a role to play in the development process. [25] Directly or indirectly involved, they work

[23] Liisa Salo-Lee provided this document to the author during Eurocampus in Lisbon, Portugal, October 2006, which had not been published at that point.

For further discussion about the concept of dialogue, see Cissna and Anderson (1998). Many scholars such as Bakhtin (1981, 1986), Buber (1958, 1965, 1967, 1970), Griffin (1997), Habermas (1984, 1987), Rogers (1959, 1961, 1987), and others have extensively studied the concept of dialogue.

[24] Date is not mentioned in Cissna and Anderson (1998). It is understood that Buber developed this theory short after 1965.

[25] These actors play a role either in coordinating activities, providing funds, institutional support, or other resources, writing policies, acting as intermediaries, developing or applying strategies, assessing, researching etc.

together towards the general common objective of improving lives of people. Dialoguing amongst these actors can take place on a person-to-person or organisational level. When it comes to face-to-face interaction, these representatives are not simply just actors in the development process, they are, as emphasised by Freire (1997), 'actors in intercommunication', (Freire, 1997: 129). Focusing on the dialogue process, the study adopts the concept of *interlocutors* to refer to development actors involved in a direct interaction.

Summary of Chapter 1:

This chapter has investigated the role of communication in the development field. A shift in development theory in the 1970s from a modernisation approach to participatory models led to an increase in the empowerment of local communities. This theoretical shift provided communities a voice in the development process. Despite ambiguities in the terminology of *communication,* the chapter differentiated between communication as a tool and as a process. Key concepts of participatory communication, empowerment and dialogue were explained. Finally, the actors involved in the dialogue process were defined and identified as *interlocutors*. *Chapter Two* will explain how communication is used in practice in development, applying it to a project carried out in Brazil and delineating its role in the *project cycle.*

2. Communication in Practice

Chapter One described the key concepts and roles of communication in development which is the basis for understanding the purpose and need of communication in development. This chapter will build upon those basic elements to understand how communication is used in development practice. Presented, first is the methodology used for this research. This is followed by a case study of a project in Brazil run by the NGO Thydêwas. Finally, the general steps for integrating effective communication in a development project are examined and discussed.

2.1 Methodology

In order to thoroughly research this topic, several approaches have been used. The optimal approach for research into development communication is direct field research. Unfortunately, this was not allowable given certain logistical concerns and secondary tools have thus been employed to gather evidence and develop an analysis of the situation. Those include qualitative and participatory research tools presented below. Additionally, they explore communication from multiple perspectives, including the views and experiences of field experts and indigenous people. Furthermore, the author is able to use personal experience in development fieldwork to provide additional insight into the difficulties of communication at the grassroots level.

2.1.1 Phase One: Literature Review, Identification of Experts and First Contact

Several influential or established literature in development and communication have been identified to provide background knowledge and guide for the research. Additionally, resources specific to the Latin American Region (LAR) were collected, including reports and documents provided by current field experts. This literature and regional resources were critically assessed and served as the foundation for this thesis. This study uses theory from two main fields of research: Development Communication and Intercultural Communication. In particular, theories of Bennett (1998), Chen (1998), Freire (1997), Hofstede (2001), Kim (2005), Mody and Gudykunst (2002), Otsyina and Rosenberg (1997), Servaes (1986), and

Welsch (1999), have been employed to serve as a basis of analysis. Few studies have crossed the areas of enquiry of Development Communication and Intercultural Communication for a singular study as this one does.

Prior to contacting and interviewing each participant, a review of the interviewee's biographical data was conducted. Several electronic communications were exchanged before specific questions were asked. This served to improve the response rate as well as for the author and participants to familiarise themselves with the interlocutor.

2.1.2 Phase Two: Data Collection

- **From Experts**

Twenty researchers, field practitioners, and academics based and focused on Latin America who worked for local NGOs, international organisations and academic institutions were contacted in February 2007. This initial communication resulted in seventeen responses which allowed exchanges with them throughout the study. Eight of the seventeen contacts accepted to contribute directly to the research. The eight experts were briefed on the aim of the study and agreed to participate. Research was conducted via electronic communication and the World Wide Web.

Table 1: Data Collection from Experts

Established contact with:	Corresponded per emails with:	Collected research data from:
20	17	8
100%	85%	40%

Although the majority of people known by the author are based in Ecuador, due to previous professional work and affiliations in that country, special attention was given to collect information from experts of multiple Latin American countries and professional sectors. Selection of research experts was purposely stratified in order to acquire feedback from

individuals of varied regional and professional backgrounds and perspectives. Further information on the contributing experts can be found in the annexes (see Annex A).

The research questions posed to the experts were structured into four main themes: definitions, opinions, experiences and recommendations (See Annex B). Research with experts was conducted either in Spanish or Portuguese based on the experts' location; Spanish (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru) or Portuguese (Brazil). The questions started with identifying broad concepts such as the definition of 'communication' in the context of development. This structure aimed to understand the participant's general perspective before moving onto more specific topics and questions. Open-ended questions were used to provide data for qualitative analysis. The research instrument was pilot tested on an expert in the field, José Luis Aguirre, to assess its reliability. The expert provided constructive feedback and the research tools were improved before continuing with the study.

- **Case Study and Chat Sessions with Indigenous People**

To add to the knowledge and insight provided by professional and academic experts in the area, a development project was identified to serve as a case study. This method is used to provide a specific project for analysis and to present the perspectives and voice of indigenous people. The Brazilian NGO, Thydêwas, was selected to serve as a case study. Thydêwas is working with indigenous communities in north-eastern Brazil on communication projects. Interviews were carried out with Thydêwas Director, Sebastián Gerlic, and with Indians from different communities involved in projects with the local NGO. In particular, one of the main projects initiated a website called *Indiosonline* through which communication could be established with Indians in their communities via Internet (See Annex D). *Indiosonline* is a portal providing a method of electronic communication through live chat technology, posts and other tools and is accessible to all. [26] This site is an example of information and communication technologies (ICTs) being used in the development process. Further information about the project is provided in the next subchapter.

[26] The website can be accessed: www.indiosonline.org.br

Table 2: Data Collection from Indigenous People

Established contact with:	Carried out interviews with:
25	8
100%	32%

Contact was made with 25 indigenous people from several communities (See Annex C).

Electronic chat sessions were planned between the author and Indian community members through the assistance of Thydêwas (communications are available in Portuguese). The need to communicate directly with indigenous people to gain their perspective is essential to provide an understanding of the communication process in development work. [27] Most of the interviews were carried out in May 2007; conversations via electronic chat technology and emails were, however, held with both Indians and Thydêwas regularly throughout the course of the study.

The main results of the data collected from experts and indigenous people are included in the analysis in *Chapter Three.*

2.2 A Development Communication Project in Latin America: The NGO Thydêwas and Brazilian indigenous people

Indigenous Brazilians live at the lowest Human Development indices in the country. Victims of social exclusion and geographic isolation, indigenous groups must deal with multiple environmental, educational, and economic threats. Their territories in the north-eastern region of the country suffer of toxic contamination, deforestation and other environmental issues. Furthermore, there are limited educational opportunities, resulting in many indigenous people

[27] This study, however, does not assess the effectiveness of the *indiosonline* project; it explores the communication processes between development workers and indigenous communities. For an evaluation of the project *indiosonline,* see Da Silva Pereira, E. (2007)'s thesis, a Brazilian student who researched the use of ICTs for indigenous communities and measured the effectiveness of the website. She accepted to share her unpublished work with the author.

being illiterate. Additionally, indigenous people are persistently pressured to abandon their traditions and their ancestral knowledge is devalued by the larger community. This social exclusion and lack of educational opportunities have left many unaware of their rights as Brazilian citizens, leaving room for corruption and hindering radical changes.

Over the course of the last three years, the NGO Thydêwas [28] has facilitated communication between several indigenous groups in Brazil, through the means of Internet. The groups are geographically separate from one another and include a twenty thousand indigenous people. The project uses computers and satellites for internet connections available in villages. The indigenous communities are responsible for the maintenance of the computers and related equipment. The website *Indiosonline* and its built-in interactive chat tool and forum allow indigenous people from different communities to communicate and share their experiences. Additionally, *Indiosonline* provides an on-line community learning and discussion board called 'Arco Digital', created in 2006, focused on the indigenous communities' rights, needs and expectations.

Thydêwas is composed of both indigenous and non-indigenous staff members and each project involves indigenous people in its execution. After searching the *Indiosonline* website, the author started using the 'chat' in order to communicate directly with indigenous people and carry out interviews. Communication was made with persons from several ethnic communities including Kiriri, Tupinambá, Pataxó-Hãhãhãe and Tumbalalá (Bahia), Xucuru-Kariri and Kariri-Xocó (Alagoas) and Pankararu (Pernambuco). At the start of the project only those seven communities were included, however the project grew to include three more communities: Pataxós, Tuxás, and Trukás. The *Indiosonline* website provides extensive information about these communities including texts and poems written and uploaded by them, as well as songs, stories and pictures.

The concept behind *Indiosonline* is based on the series of books 'Índios na visão dos índios'[29] created by 'Indians'[30] and published between 1997 and 2004. In 2004, the idea of 'connecting' the villages was conceived. This idea grew into a project, supported by UNESCO, where

[28] Thydêwá is a Pankararu word that means 'esperança da terra' (hope of the Earth).

[29] 'Indians in the Indians' vision'

[30] The term 'Indian' has the same meaning as 'indigenous people' in this study and refers only to Brazilian Indians.

seven computers and internet connections were provided to the communities. At the start of the project, challenges involved technical difficulties and indigenous communities' lack of knowledge for modern technology. In one case, when the computer 'contracted a virus', some Indians in Kariri-Xocó (Bahia) feared that the computer virus might 'contaminate them and their community until a technician arrived.'[31]

In 2006, the website widened its objectives and a collaborative learning community called 'Arco Digital' (digital education, e-learning using Moodle open-source software),[32] was started. 'Arco Digital' translated into English is 'Digital Bow.' The symbolism of this name is significant. Traditionally, the bow and arrow, is used for hunting and self-defence, and now the *digital bow* is providing a forum to create stronger communities. 'Arco Digital' is available free of cost and its information is built collaboratively. The main objectives of the course are the exchange of ideas, reflection on development, citizenship, and the use of ICTs to share experiences, practices and knowledge. Sessions and materials are available on health, journalism, education, citizenship rights, economics, and other relevant topics. The 'Arco Digital' starts with dialogue on indigenous realities, focused on building the communities knowledge and interacting for positive change. In the 'Arco Digital' community the Indians are the protagonists responsible for the choice of the ways their communities will take.

The communication approach of Thydêwas will be explored throughout the rest of this paper. Although the research's focus is not the significance of the internet for indigenous people, through discussions with Indians the author had the opportunity to get insights into the meaning of internet and the *Indiosonline* website for them. This greatly contributed to a better understanding of the research context. [33]

[31] This case was shared by Gerlic, the Thydêwas Director, in an interview with the author.

[32] For more information about Moodles see http://moodle.org/

[33] See an extract of a discussion about the benefits of the project for them in Annexe E, Table 11. For people involved in *indiosonline* and 'Arco Digital', technology is an important object of reflection associated with the current image of Indians. 'A reflexão sobre a Internet envolve a importância da comunicação, da conexão. Importância que não pára em si mesma, mas modifica as relações dos índios consigo mesmos e das instituições oficiais que os representam: o poder de comunicação da Internet potencializa a independência deles para buscar ações a partir dos "seus próprios ideais".'

2.3 Project Cycle

Development projects are conducted in *phases* which can generally be organised on a timeline or *project cycle*. Drawing on the models and methodologies used by international development organisations such as the World Bank, FAO, UNESCO and UNICEF [34] as well as locally-based development organisations such as the Brazilian NGO Thydêwas, a commonly used project cycle structure includes the following four phases:

- Identification;
- Design;
- Execution;
- Monitoring and evaluation.

These phases will be used in this study to provide clarity to the project description and validity to the research study.

A 'project' is a complex entity and a process in which the inclusion of participatory communication is not always easily achievable. [35] The role of communication in each project phase consists of providing the means and the basis for sharing experiences and knowledge. Furthermore, it allows all members to actively participate in the project process from inception to completion. [36]

[34] More information can be found on the respective websites of those organisations.

[35] It is important to understand what is a 'project' in order to examine the place of communication in it. A professional once explained to the author that a project was part of the '4 ps': Política (Policy) / Programa (Programme) / Proyecto (Project) / Presupuesto (Budget). A 5th 'P', to represent 'People', should be added to this view of development work.
A programme is generally divided into various projects and is considered as the operative part. Each project is then divided into a series of activities that all have a particular objective. Projects follow a similar pattern in many development agencies.

[36] At UNESCO, before a project starts, a so-called 'project matrix' is elaborated. It delineates the objectives of a project, classified into 'development objectives' and 'immediate objectives'. All elements are determined in terms of:

- inputs (funds, equipment, coordinators, support, material, participants etc),
- outputs (concrete results such as people trained, increased amount of quality programming, CMCs, produced documents etc)
- activities (organisational activities such as staff recruitment, identification of communities and potential partners, selection and preparation of sites in communities for media facilities; training activities and workshops, contents, planning, strategies; programme production and broadcasting; community feedback and involvement activities through independent evaluators, meetings, community fora etc)
- results (long lasting results such as participation, equity etc)

'The project matrix gives an outline of the future project document. It includes performance indicators, and sometimes benchmarks. Performance indicators are usually quantitative, like more radio programmes produced, but can also be qualitative measures, better radio programmes and a real challenge always is to develop reliable qualitative measures' (Andrew Radolf, UNESCO). Each immediate objective to be achieved foresaw certain outputs, which in turn required the implementation of certain activities.

According to the World Bank toolkit (2005), the first phase of a project should be a 'Communication Needs Assessment (CNA)' that includes the following steps:

- Investigate key issues and define the stakeholders;
- Assess local capacities, probe behaviours that need to be addressed through communication;
- Gain insight into socio-political concerns and roadblocks that affect the project;
- Determine the knowledge level and perceptions of the media with respect to the project and the issues related to it;
- Learn what the NGOs are doing in the same area; and
- Verify the availability and skills level of research agencies and communication agencies in the country. (The World Bank's toolkit, 2005: 6)

This beginning phase implies a gathering of information and the identification of issues, needs and opportunities as well as of resource persons and organisations that can provide support or expertise for the success of the project (e.g. NGOs, rural radios, etc). A certain level of knowledge about the community and the local context needs to be acquired before any concrete project can be designed. The first phase can be started by any interlocutor. This interaction is defined as exchanges aimed to articulate a goal together, to identify the needs in terms of partnership, knowledge, and material conditions as well as prioritise problems (Bessette, 2004).

In terms of dialogue and exchange, the first phase is crucial to lay a positive foundation for the whole project; the next steps of the project cycle will build on this first interaction. According to Fraser and Villet (1994), the second phase is about identifying and implementing concrete initiatives to respond to problems. However, the 'problems' mentioned by Fraser and Villet need to have been previously identified and objectives set together with the community members. Phases two and three are referred to as 'Communication Strategy Design' and 'Communication Strategy Implementation' in the World Bank's toolkit (2005: 6). Both of these phases involve the choice of appropriate tools to implement specific activities. [37] In the monitoring and evaluation phase, FAO emphasises the need to monitor and evaluate efforts. [38]

[37] Such as: Training and capacity building programmes, production of radio programmes, brochures, organisation of conferences, purchase of communication equipment etc. See also *Chapter One.*

[38] In The World Bank methodology (2005), this phase involves in particular:

- Carrying out public opinion tracking studies
- Qualitative program and products evaluations

This phase allows for corrective actions to be taken and plans for the future to be made (Fraser and Villet, 1994).

This project cycle and the process of including and applying participatory communication in it, is explored for the Thydêwas project. [39] The *Indiosonline* project developed because, as Gerlic explains, indigenous people expressed interest in computers and the internet. They found the technology either 'entertaining, interesting or practical'. In particular, motivation for the project *Indiosonline* emerged with the objective of improving relations and communication with and between indigenous people. Additionally, internet was perceived by both the NGO and indigenous people to be a powerful tool to generate changes and beyond a website, an alliance was then created.

The Thydêwas staff described their project methodology as 'experimentation'. Although, they may not use a defined project cycle, the four primary phases of a project cycle can be seen in the evolution of this project. At the first stage, identification takes place in several sub-phases., beginning with the introduction. Gerlic explains that he would 'never go to an unknown community to start working'. [40] The first visit allows both community and the NGO staff members to get to know each other in order to begin building a rapport. As Gerlic emphasises, the first visit is about 'approaching the hearts and not the heads!' [41]

This informal approach has been carried throughout the *Indiosonline* project. All meetings, conversations and decisions during the project were made in '*bastão de fala*' and '*rodas*' [42] where all participants had the opportunity to share ideas and experiences. Throughout the identification and design stages, Gerlic lived immersed in the indigenous world, constantly remaking what became a project, which remains in a constant collective construction, an innovation process, discovering, and experimenting, with right and wrong. Now, the project has moved into the implementation and execution stages, Gerlic has chosen to take some

[39] Using as elements of analysis documentation and information made available by the UNESCO office in Quito and the NGO Director, Gerlic. Additionally, interviews from both professionals and indigenous people provided valuable insight into the participatory communication process.

[40] 'Eu nunca chego numa aldeia que não conheço para trabalhar...' (Interview Gerlic).

[41] 'A primeira visita tem que SER HUMANA, todas são, mas a primeira é fundamentalmente de aproximação de corações e não de cabeças!' (Interview Gerlic).

[42] Informal roundtable meetings, sometimes sitting outside in the community

distance from the project and the indigenous communities he is serving. He has, also, removed himself as coordinator of the project in order to encourage more active participation of the indigenous people. Distancing himself from the day-to-day implementation of the project has given the Thydêwas Director greater perspective, allowing him to provide evaluation and monitoring for the project.

Today the network is to a certain extent run autonomously, where the mechanisms of control are owned by the indigenous communities. The project is in a process of becoming self managed and sustainable. Following a participatory model, it enables people to undertake and share their own analysis and self perception, leading to sustainable action instead of having external researchers or professionals interested in gathering as much information as possible about the area and needs of the communities. For Gerlic, participatory communication exists in practice 'when the actors (persons or institutions) join efforts, starting with a common objective and opening the hand of egoisms. When interlocutors are ready to give and not only to receive and when both are aware of their co-responsibility for everything and assume their own part'. [43]

[43] 'quando os atores (pessoas ou instituções) somam esforços partindo de uma abertura, um objetivo em comum e abrindo mão de egoísmos. Quando o ator não espera do outro mais dá. Quando o ator sabe que é co-responsavel de tudo e assume sua parte. Havendo dois ou mais atores assim, é então possível a comunicação participativa. Nela cada um tem seu valor, seu respeito e nessa alquimia tudo fica mais possível'. (Interview Gerlic).

2.4 Discussion

Despite rhetoric within the development community of the importance of community participation and project ownership, problems of communication still arise. Some scholars and professionals lay blame on a lack of skilled staff and/or methodological weaknesses because most professionals do not know *how* to apply a participatory approach.[44] Otsyina and Rosenberg (1997: 90) state that even if participation is part of The World Bank or UNDP policies in developing countries, there are no 'mechanisms' for implementation.

A project methodology and *cycle* are important to provide a framework for a given programme, and to define project indicators in quantitative and qualitative ways. [45] However, as illustrated by the approach of the NGO Thydêwas, when using a participatory approach, a project cannot be created before interaction with a community has been initiated. A participatory process requires tailor-made analysis that takes into consideration the specific needs of the location and people. A 'development project' cannot be identical from one situation to another, although it can be designed with the purpose of being 're-implementable'. For example, successful operation of a Community Multimedia Center (CMC) in one community does not mean that the creation of the same centre will be equally successful in a different context and community. In the same way, if identical capacity building seminars are repeated in different contexts and with other persons, results might differ considerably. This is why the communicating with local people to conduct a needs assessment is extremely important. Communication is often merely an add-on component meant to resolve problems arising during the implementation phase.[46] However, greater time must be spent in identifying community needs and understanding the context and people before a project is begun. Each project should be treated separately, despite similarities in content or project topics.

[44] See Otsyina and Rosenberg (1997: 90) and Gumucio-Dagron (2006)

[45] See UNESCO project matrix explained in footnote [36]

[46] See Anyaegbunam et al., 1998 in Mefalopulos (2004)

Furthermore, in a participatory project, people need to feel that they directly play a role in the design and implementation of development activities. The first phase should therefore be called 'interaction' instead of 'identification'. Interaction implies more than identifying and listening, it is about getting to know the interlocutor, showing interest, enthusiasm, motivation and understanding and creating exchange. [47] In the case of Thydêwas, the benefits of the use of internet in indigenous communities were shared between indigenous people and the NGO staff. The Thydêwas project followed a participatory approach as discussed in *Chapter One*, in which everyone contributed from the very beginning. It was not a top-down approach of development, since it did not start with decision- makers sitting in their offices. The elements of the project were based on input from people interested in the project. Gerlic and his team acted as local mediators. Due to the relative novelty of such project, it was difficult to get communities and national institutions to fully envision it. The preparatory phase for Thydêwas was thus to involve participating communities into the decision-making process leading to the establishment of the *Indiosonline* project. Compared with what usually occurs in many other development projects, where objectives and activities are set and planned by a few people with a minimal input by other sources, Thydêwas' approach was a step forward, entirely people-oriented.

In the World Bank's description of the identification phase, the words 'investigate', 'assess', 'determine' 'learn', 'verify' are presented as tasks to be completed. Despite representing an exhaustive list, it can be argued that the CNA model leaves little space for flexibility and remains static. Communication is however a dynamic process between *interlocutors*. It may be implicit that these elements are to be completed by talking and listening, but communication does not clearly appear here as a dynamic or active process. This leads to the question of whether a person can be expected to be 'communicative' and open for dialogue if communication is presented as a static task to be achieved. Terms such as 'talk', 'dialogue', 'show interest', 'listen', 'exchange', 'learn' ought be present in project identification.

As argued in *Chapter One* and illustrated here with the example of Thydêwas in Brazil, communication needs to be understood as a social process and a human interaction.[48]

[47] See the World Bank's toolkit 2005.
[48] The same problem of confusion examined in *Chapter One* is faced in practice. Communication tends to be seen as a tool. Communication *is* a tool, but it cannot be reduced to a tool *only*. Such methodologies on how to implement projects are useful, they orientate the development 'communicator'. However, those steps seem to be delineated in a static way. For example, the evaluation phase as presented above is valid if communication is seen as a tool and the use of strategies.

Human Interaction and 'Horizontal Communication'

'I must say it in plain words: the communication model still dominating most of the international development and cooperation agencies, both bilateral and multilateral, is characterized by its verticality and its eagerness for visibility' (Gumucio Dagron, 2006).[49]

In the modernisation development paradigm of the 1950's, a *two-step flow of communication* was developed in which the population was divided into active (opinion leaders) and passive agents (opinion followers). This model implied a receiver - who reacts to messages – and a sender – who disseminates information.[50] It considered communication to be a means of information and persuasion. Communication was mainly used to spread the models and attitudes adopted in developed countries. However, people in communities cannot be seen as mere receivers, those being taught the best way to live their lives. In contrast, in the alternative approaches to development, participatory communication is not a speaker-listener model but becomes a real discussion, where needs, goals, and means are shared. The identification of facts - and possibly of problems - can be made together between people and the practitioners. According to Eade (Eds) (2001), 'No one can decide what human development is to mean for someone else. And no society or culture can dictate the perspectives or values of another society' (Eade and Ligteringen (Eds), 2001: 151). Involving people is important for sustainable development.

Working in Latin America, the author experienced a situation in which development practitioners were meeting to discuss a project (the creation of a cultural centre) for Afro-Ecuadorian people. At the meeting one participant commented: 'we are trying to build a project for Afro-Ecuadorians, this meeting is supposed to discuss and agree on some kind of improvement for them, and we didn't bother to invite any Afro-descendant to this meeting'.

However, if communication is to be seen as a process, instead of a static project evaluation, it should be thought of as a 'dynamic' process and by consequence having a dynamic evaluation, with more direct interaction with people and qualitative feedback from them.

[49] This document was retrieved from internet and the page number cannot be provided here. Gumucio Dagron's article (2006) was submitted by Florence Enghel for Glocal Times.
http://webzone.k3.mah.se/projects/gt2/viewarticle.aspx?articleID=104&issueID=0

[50] See Beltrán (1980) and Servaes (1986). This can also be compared to Laswell's theory.

Plans and decisions cannot be made by people from development organisations sitting around a table thinking that they know what communities need, without feedback from those populations. This example illustrates the fact that people need to be included from the beginning. This might be well-recognised by development professionals, but this is unfortunately not always applied. Interviews with Brazilian indigenous people revealed mixed opinions about the decision-making processes. When asked whether some decisions about projects are made without the real participation of community members, the Indian Xandaopank answers: 'in some way, yes' and Karotecy mentions: 'sometimes the associates who carry out a project only bring the document for the *cacique* (leader) to sign it' (Annex E, Table 10:2). On the other hand, Maya explains that in her community, decisions cannot be made by the *cacique* (leader) without the voice of the community (See Annex E, Table 10:2). Opinions and experiences are very diverse among the interviewees.

Additionally, some technical and organisational difficulties might hinder human interaction within projects. Often, project 'beneficiaries' within development organisations, are supposed to write technical and financial reports, to explain the course of the activities and justify the use of funds or other resources. [51] Although these reports are often written by a local NGO or institution, that will, in that case, serve as intermediary between the donors or the main development organisation and the local community; [52] there is perhaps a need for a third person within the main development organisation, not only to check and validate those reports, but to assist 'beneficiaries' in writing them. A main challenge for the implementation of participatory communication is the rigidity present within development organisations. From inside, practitioners complain about administrative rules and lack of flexibility but have accepted bureaucracy as the norm. The importance of a participatory approach in development is increasingly recognised. However, in practice creating a participatory approach remains difficult. Additionally, the idea that people think the same way in terms of administration and organisation may lead to real difficulties and disaccord between professionals and local people. In the author's experience, reports were sent by locals and criticised by professionals for their 'non appropriateness' or incompleteness. It cannot be expected that communities, and

[51] This is based on the author's experience working at UNESCO Regional Office for Communication and Information in Quito, Ecuador.

[52] The NGO Thydêwas, for example, served as link between UNESCO and local communities for some development projects (the creation of a community radio) and was the one in charge of submitting the reports.

even local NGOs or other institutions, know how international development organisations work administratively. Participation cannot only be defined by making people feeling more involved; it needs to give them a real opportunity to be involved, by adapting not only projects, but also strategies and methodologies to the people concerned. New organisational communication tools need to be developed and adapted to each group of interlocutors. [53] Using the case study as an example, the *Indiosonline* website became a useful tool, allowing indigenous people to write and share their views, with others in communities and the NGO staff. Thydêwas pays close attention to everything that is published on-line by indigenous people and maintains constant interaction with them. Thus, this project provides a real opportunity for Brazilian Indians to be involved in their own process of development.

Finally, lack of time during the project cycle can often be a reason for limited 'human interaction' with communities. Genuine dialogue relies on having time available to form relationships. [54] There is a serious need for more time to be allocated to human interaction in development work. Acknowledging the need for listening, interacting and enhancing dialogue in a participatory approach is an important first step, but it must be recognised that good intentions are not enough. At UNESCO for example, [55] a communication advisor helps local people write proposals in order to increase chances for it to be accepted by donors or decision makers within the organisation. This individual also coordinates, closely follows the activities and visits the communities. However, that same person has to worry about official deadlines, technical aspects, monitoring and writing reports for headquarters. S/he remains busy in managing people, delegating tasks, visiting other sites, reviewing several projects and budgets at the same time. Administrative needs are an on-going challenge for development practitioners. Project coordinators go to the field to interact with people, getting to know the communities and activities to assess their impact etc. However, there is a need for other people to work together with them, who do not have the same 'project-oriented', bureaucratic obstacles. Some agencies hire consultants or 'communicators' for specific projects; this

[53] Not only in terms of adequate language but also at the organisational and administrative level. For example, the frequency of reports to be submitted can be reviewed, assistance can be provided, and expectations and the purposes of those reports have to be clearly formulated.

[54] There is little literature that theorises dialogue as a momentary phenomenon. Buber (1967) is the one who refers specifically to 'dialogic moments' (Buber, 1967: 692) and shows specific interest for the limits of dialogue (Cissna and Anderson, 1998: 67). Alternative studies could investigate the time factor in depth.

[55] This is based on the working experience of the author in the UNESCO office in Quito, Ecuador and does not necessarily reflect the views of UNESCO and/or the communication advisor.

practice should be increased. Development organisations must consider whether true dialogue can take place if the professional has a specific mandate, deadlines, limited budget and administrative obligations. As much as a development practitioner is ready to listen to the people, respect them, show empathy and be open to them as a human being; that same person might be limited in carefully listening and reaching 'horizontal communication' due to his/her mandate and the necessity to 'get the job done'.

Summary of Chapter 2:

This chapter has developed the methodology used for this study. It has explored how participatory development communication is applied in practice. By examining a communication project run by the Brazilian NGO Thydêwas, *Chapter 2* has discussed the project cycle, emphasising the importance of the first phase of 'interaction'.

While the need for a dialogical approach, including more human interaction and horizontal communication, is agreed; it remains a difficult process to reach between development practitioners and people in communities. Based on data collected through interviews with experts in the field and indigenous people in Brazil, *Chapter 3* will analyse some of the challenges and provide some concrete recommendations. By doing do, it is acknowledged that each situation, each project and person involved in the process are different; similar challenges may, however, be faced.

3. Challenges for Dialogue in Latin American Development Work

While dialogue is generally accepted as an essential element of development programmes, both visible and invisible barriers exist that potentially limit the effectiveness of communication between communities and development practitioners. 'Visible' barriers can include cost, time, logistics, methodology, language, expertise, infrastructure and political obstacles. [56] For example, rural communities are often remote and not reached easily by professionals. This physical barrier of distance poses a challenge to a practitioner's ability to make the frequent visits necessary for on-going face-to-face communication. Further concrete barriers, such as language, may emerge when development practitioners interact with communities that speak less-widespread indigenous languages. Lack of ability to speak a local language obliges professionals to dialogue via translators, which reduces the intimacy and quality of the interaction. These visible barriers are easily identified and as such are often anticipated in development work. The difficulties associated with effective communication are vast, however, several areas in which communication can be improved, have been identified.[57] This chapter highlights communication challenges faced by development practitioners and local communities, analysing information gathered from experts and indigenous peoples as well as the author's own personal experience.

Interconnectedness

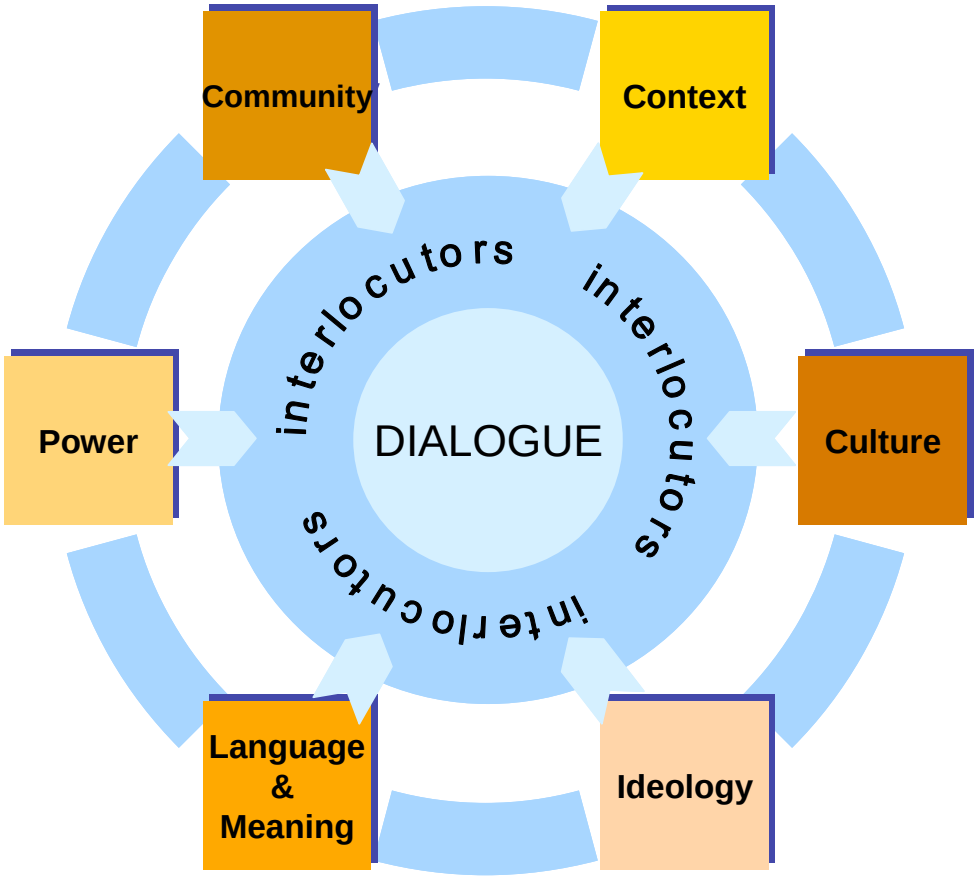
Through examining the dialogue process that takes place between professionals and local people, the 'less visible' challenges of communication can be identified. Each of these challenges cannot be considered independently, but instead, the full meaning of these challenges is best understood as closely interrelated to each of the other elements. Often, multiple challenges exist, which when combined, hinder effective communication. When analysing these elements, challenges tend to be juxtaposed as stagnant and completely

[56] Some of these difficulties, such as administrative procedures and lack of time have been discussed in *Chapter Two.*

[57] Alternative studies could explore these visible factors more in depth, as well as the challenges engendered by differences in education and knowledge.

separate from one another. This implies a linearity of arguments, which misrepresents the complexity of the social process. Viewing the dialogue as static overlooks the fact that communication is a social relationship and as such, faces different challenges in each interaction. The diagram below visually reflects the interconnectedness of dialogue challenges. The identified challenges are positioned in a circular shape to symbolise that they are interrelated and to avoid a static or linear representation. Rather than utilising a quantitative approach in analysing these challenges, a holistic approach is taken in examining the dialogue as a dynamic process and developing suggestions for improvement. The primary challenges to effective communication between development practitioners and local communities, determined through analysis of independent research, are represented in the diagram below.

Figure 3: The dynamic process of dialogue



Factors influencing the dynamic process of dialogue are represented in this model. The circular representation reflects the holistic approach of the analysis and the complex communication process, in which various factors influence others, which ultimately influence the process of dialogue itself. The interlocutors carry or are influenced by the elements represented on the exterior ring of the model, namely *Language and Meaning*; *Ideology*; *Culture*; *Context*; *Community*; and *Power*. Because this study is driven by the idea that dialogue is not a mere transmission of information, messages and ideas (see *Chapter One*); the classical model of two persons or groups of persons on opposing sides of a communication flow is not appropriate to represent dialogue here. In this model, emphasis is placed on the *process* and not on the contents of the dialogue or the role of the interlocutors; therefore terms such as *message*, *senders* and *receivers* are not present. The six themes surrounding the dialogue, in *no* specific order of importance, reflect the structure of this chapter.

It is the author's intention not to depict the more 'visible' challenges to communication previously discussed. While those can be significant issues, it is strongly believed that the main difficulties for dialogue are not related to technical issues, such as terminology, skills, techniques or methodology. If effective dialogue is difficult to achieve, it is perhaps because visible difficulties and technical reasons are masking more fundamental reasons. Methodologies, plans and strategies for communication provide security, but on their own, they will not bring about successful dialogue. A heightened awareness of the human factor is necessary. The 'less visible' communication challenges, identified in six themes, are connected by the fact that they all relate to the attitude of the interlocutors during the dialogue and to what people bring with them into the process of communication. Interlocutors start a dialogue for example with presumptions, objectives, expectations and opinions, that are intrinsically linked to their language, ideology, culture, context, community, position and the way they see the Self and the Other. The way people use words and understand meanings is connected to people's ideologies, to their culture and the way they relate to others and to the world. Likewise, ideologies may be related to the culture, the context, the communities people are part of as individuals, and to the hierarchy they know. Context influences dialogue and is directly related to the community and previous experiences; and so on and so forth. The interconnectedness of these elements is reflected in many ways. This study discusses these challenges by examining six different angles. Alternative studies could divide these six themes further. The themes were divided selectively based on analysis from feedback of development

practitioners and communities in Latin America. [58]Analysis of other programmes in the area or programmes operating in different parts of the world may highlight different communication challenges. In this case, the discussion may not do justice to the diversity of ideas, theories and experiences. Accompanying analysis of the six themes are recommendations, so that the results of the research can be practically applied to support more effective communication between development practitioners and people in communities.

3.1 Language and Meanings

In the context of Latin American development work, 'language' is a very broad concept that refers to (1) the vast number of indigenous languages and local vernaculars spoken where development activities are carried out; and (2) the working languages of organisations, mainly Spanish and Portuguese in the Latin American Region (LAR). It refers as well to the jargon and specific vocabulary used by professionals to talk about development issues.

Language: Tool and Barrier

Experts in communication and development in the LAR reported that language is both a tool and a barrier. When asked about the main challenges faced, López, a Peruvian communication expert, mentions 'language' first, evaluating it as a tremendous barrier, the most important one. In López's opinion, difficulties created due to the lack of a common spoken language are not irresolvable, but are real problems. The expert emphasises that communication through a translator is never the same and that if communities and practitioners speak two different languages, 'humbleness is even more indispensable'. According to Radolf, UNESCO Communication Advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean, 'Finding a common language, (…) is always a challenge. But it can be done because we can break through to our common humanity. (…) an interpreter is usually necessary (…) with persistence and patience, the dialogue can be achieved.' In the same way, Cimadevilla, an Argentinean researcher in development communication, considers the use of a common language as fundamental to effective dialogue. Cimadevilla argues that if two persons talking the same language have

[58] This analysis uses information from the two different perspectives, professionals and people in communities where projects are implemented.

difficulties, when it is not the same language, the possibility of understanding can only be reduced. Gascón agrees and asserts that 'the use of the local language always represents a first approaching to the recognition of the culture'. [59]

Information gathered from Latin American professionals overwhelmingly shows that the use of a common language is essential. However, conversations with Indians in Brazil show the opposite regarding this position. In the case of Thydêwas, the common language used between the staff and indigenous communities is Portuguese. Maya, from the Pataxó community, does not believe that language is a barrier for dialogue with development practitioners and 'outsiders' (see Annex E Table 2). In the interview, Maya outlines that if the same language is spoken, there is no problem of understanding. If the spoken languages are different, interpreters can come to the community to effectively facilitate the communication. This finding indicates that challenges generated by the use of language, even a common one, tend not to be recognised by community members. Nevertheless, according to the author's experience, it can be argued that meanings given to words go beyond the use of a common language. Every individual communicates; however, it cannot be assumed that everyone communicates identically. Even with interlocutors ready to listen and dialogue, misunderstandings occur and meanings are not conveyed the same way. Difficulties classified under the concept of 'language' do not refer only to challenges in terms of linguistic competence in local vernaculars.

Meanings

Meanings vary and can be at the origin of important misunderstandings. In dialogue between development professionals and people in communities, it is as important to verify that intended messages are understood, as it is to make sure that no unintended messages have been sent. For example, confusion of meaning can occur when professionals make statements that are interpreted by communities as promises. Individuals may have different understandings of the concept of a promise. For some, a statement such as 'we'll be in touch about following up on activities' means that further activities will definitely be carried out soon. For others, this might be a causal way to conclude an activity and save face in front of a

[59] 'el uso de la lengua local siempre representa un primer acercamiento de reconocimiento a la cultura'. (Gascón)

demanding group.[60] In development work, caution must be shown when statements are made that may be interpreted as a promise. Castellón, a Bolivian practitioner who participated in the study, discusses this challenge, saying 'Basically, nothing should be mentioned that cannot be completed in the future. The main challenge is to not create false expectations'. It often happens that when development practitioners enter a poor community, people begin to describe all the problems they face. Distinction is often not made between areas such as health, agriculture and education because all these issues are connected for a poor community. Because development projects typically have a particular scope and cannot address all issues a community might face, it is important for professionals to clearly discuss their mandate with community members, without raising wrong expectations about the intended work of the development practitioner. [61] The author experienced this difficulty by conducting interviews with Indians. It was challenging to make clear and discuss the purposes of the research to the participants.

Again, clearly relaying meaning goes beyond challenges of understanding and speaking a language. Difficulties occurring during the interviews with Brazilian indigenous people were not related to the knowledge of Portuguese language, but rather to challenges in conveying meanings. Terms such as 'development project', 'easy vs. difficult' and even 'dialogue' posed some difficulties. It was necessary to reach common understanding of several concepts and words in order to pursue the interview. This is valid not only for interaction between development professionals or researchers and indigenous people, but also for any people from different contexts working together and/or interacting. As part of an international team at UNESCO/Quito, the author witnessed communication difficulties between the organisation's staff and indigenous communities, but also within a team that had different cultural, professional and educational backgrounds. Terms such as 'deadlines', 'reports', 'evaluation' and 'strategy', not only convey different meanings in different languages, but may also have a different meaning from one person to another. Interpretation of the meaning can depend on several factors such as the previous experiences and personal understanding of one

[60] For information about 'Face threatening acts' and 'Face saving acts', see Brown and Levinson (1987) and Gudykunst's Face Negotiation Theory (2003: 22).

[61] The author also experienced this challenge in India. The purpose of some visits to poor areas was to evaluate the situation in terms of hygiene, water and sanitation and discuss with local people their needs. However, people were more concerned to talk about other issues such as the lack of public transport to go to the city or the bad education that their children received than the sanitation situation, which was the 'mandate' of the author's team during those visits. It is necessary to show respect and listening to a community's problems and needs, without raising wrong expectations about the intended work of the development practitioner.

individual. This finding confirms Bennett's argument (1998:13) that language is a tool for communication as well as 'a "system of representation" for perception and thinking' and the statement of Whorf (1998) that 'language largely determines the way in which we understand our reality' (in Bennett, 1998:13).[62] If participation is to be promoted as explained in *Chapter 1*, it cannot be left out that the term 'participation' may be interpreted differently and have a different meaning to every party involved in a development project.

Overall, it is determined that language is a challenge in Latin American development work. However, language is not a challenge to be isolated. For example, Radolf mentions the importance of other senses, 'what you see, what you feel are also important and contribute to understanding'. Meanings and messages are not conveyed only through words. Other mediums, such as body language, are important and have the potential for misunderstanding and mistaken interpretation of meaning.[63] Arguing that language can be a barrier does however not exclude the fact that language is a tool or a medium to communicate, a tool that needs to be used with awareness of the limits and dangers that it carries with it. Beyond a tool, language should be seen as a *practice*. A tool is rather to be represented as something static whereas practice leaves more space for a dynamic evolution. If understood as a practice, language – and thus its dynamism - can always be improved. Some suggestions for such improvement are made below.

Recommendations

The main recommendations related to the language are **(a) -** awareness of the local indigenous languages of a community; it cannot be assumed that everyone will speak the national language, be it Portuguese (in Brazil), or Spanish (in other Latin American countries) and **(b) -** the use of a common language. This needs to be accompanied by **(c) -** an awareness of

[62] Every time a word or concept is used, different elements need to be distinguished such as in Praxmarer's model *'The Mill of Meaning'* that illustrates this ambiguity. Praxmarer's model has six processes (etymological definition, lexical explanation, conceptual definition, associative connotations, contextual and situational interpretations, universal sensations) through which the 'raw word' goes and comes out, ideally, as an informed and transformed 'refined meaning' which in turn becomes a 'shared meaning' with the potential to become an 'accepted meaning'. This model illustrates that the meaning of key-concepts is not always internationally shared or universal, and far from unequivocal. It contributes to the awareness that the meaning of words is much more than 'what meets eye and ear' (Praxmarer, 2006). Misunderstandings about meanings can have strong repercussions on projects and development work. This is a crucial element to be aware of when using specific concepts.

[63] For more information about body language, see Hall (1959) and Ekman et al (1972).

possible linguistic misunderstandings and pragmatic failures. [64] Words do not always have exact translation from one language to another and variations in pragmatics need to be considered when interlocutors are communicating and trying to reach understanding. This implies the need for **(d) -** a strong collaboration between interlocutors, and a reduction in pre-held assumptions from both parties. This collaboration can be strengthened by another local person. The use of an interpreter can be helpful, but a local person acting as a 'moderator' can facilitate discussions in the local language (Bessette, 1996). Furthermore, **(e) -** organisational jargon and professional language is not appropriate for communities. According to Freire (1997), 'often, educators and politicians speak and are not understood because their language is not attuned to the concrete situation of the people they address' (Freire, 1997: 96). Not only during the interaction, but also all reports and documents referring to the development activities that are or will be carried out must be made available, in the style and language appropriate to all the actors or 'interlocutors' involved. On the other hand, Bourdieu (1994) explains accurately that it would be wrong to reject all problems of linguistic misunderstandings simply on the use of technical jargon (Bourdieu, 1994: 4). The way meanings are conveyed also plays a significant role in the dialogue process.

With regards to the meanings, **(f)** - the *negotiation of meanings* communication technique is suggested. With the aim to resolve difficulties, this strategy is used to share mis- or non-understandings, to recognise and clarify problems and to negotiate during the communication process (Gass and Varonis, 1991).[65] This is reinforced by the practitioner Castellón, who emphasises the importance of clarifying everything in order to reduce doubts and make sure intended messages are fully understood. When a common language is spoken and/or the choice of a lingua franca made, negotiated communication can be a way to help the interlocutor; it becomes a cooperation strategy. Negotiation of meanings can be defined as a strategic competence in the framework of the communication competences, [66] including the

[64] For a discussion about pragmatics, see Thomas (1983) and Yule (1996).

[65] In defining the negotiation of meaning, a difference needs to be made between native speakers and non-native speakers' discourse. The complexity of the negotiation in each discourse may vary. See Gass and Varonis (1991)

[66] Looking for instance at the first model of communication competence presented by Canale (1983), in which it is divided into grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence, negotiation of meaning is part of strategic competence. However, in order to use it effectively, the other elements of communication competence need to be involved. One cannot negotiate meaning and use fully a strategic competence without having the minimum required grammatical, sociolinguistic and discourse competences in a given language.
Negotiation of meaning can also be part of the actional competence (Celce-Murcia et al, 1995). Actional competence is defined as the ability in conveying and understanding communicative intent, which also means knowing how to express a speech act.

ability to convey and understand communicative intent, to make comprehension checks, indicate a mis- or non understanding, ask for more information, further explanation or repetition, or apologise for a misunderstanding. [67] This also includes strong cooperation, as well as problem-solving willingness and competences. Negotiation of meanings can occur in any language, in a monolingual dialogue or a multilingual environment (Gass and Varonis, 1991). Moreover, as examined in *Chapter One*, the process of dialogue allows the interlocutors to create new meanings. In dialogue, meanings can be discovered between individuals rather than owned by each person. This reinforces the need for negotiation, not for ideas or opinions, but for meanings, in order to reach mutual understanding.

Lack of understanding is often an issue between practitioners and communities. This was highlighted in an interview with the Indians. Maya and Aram both emphasise the fact that some indigenous people fail to understand projects (see Annex E Tables 3 and 6). This is a significant finding for this research. Karotecy's statement 'we don't understand them (the projects)' divulges a clear lack of clarity and verification for good understanding between interlocutors. It is recommended to **(g)** - use clarity and honesty in order to attain transparency in the process of dialogue. [68] This is supported by information collected from experts. The main recommendation made by the experts Cimadevilla and Brunetti is the use of honesty. The Argentinean professional Cimadevilla explains that the community must first 'find a sense to the motive why I am [he is] going to a community'. In Cimadevilla's view, if the community understands his motivation from the beginning, other difficulties will have greater likelihood of being resolved.

[67] See Canale (1983); and Celce-Murcia et al (1995)

[68] That includes also being cautious with statements that can be interpreted as promises as explained previously.

3.2 Ideology

Collected information for this study reveals that differences in ideology and vision can pose an obstacle to communication. Although Gumucio Dagron considers language a barrier for real dialogue, the development practitioner stresses that it is not about words, but rather about ideology. To illustrate, Gumucio Dagron gives the example of governmental development agents who have the ability to speak a community language, but whose ideology is less connected to community interests than a visitor from another country who does not speak the local language. Language is important to communicate, but the *ideology*, including ideas, motivations, intentions, and visions, are even more significant. [69] According to Gumucio Dagron, it is more important to **(a) -** remain aware and cautious of what one says and expresses, rather than mastering a language. In the expert's words, 'A translator can resolve a language problem but cannot do anything against an ideological discrepancy and a lack of communication determined by attitudes of external agents'. [70] Supporting this argument, Thydêwas Director, Gerlic, states that ideas play a stronger role than language. He states, 'Barriers are not in the languages but in the heads'.[71] For the NGO Director, what poses the main difficulties in a dialogue is 'trying to communicate with the head'. [72] Along the same lines, the researcher Cimadevilla explains that difficulties tend to concentrate on different 'visions of the world'. The major problem lies in reaching a common understanding of expectations, defining development issues together with communities and discussing what actions can be taken.

Comments by Indian community members on ideological challenges are described below. These are some extracts of Aram's statements, an Indian from the Pankararu community, taken from different conversations with the author:

[69] It is acknowledged that the concept of ideology may be too strong for this discussion. Whereas ideology is defined by Geertz (1973) as a system that 'names the structure of situations in such a way that the attitude contained toward them is one of commitment' (Geertz, C. (1973: 231), the concept of ideology in this study refers to a mode of thinking, a vision of the world or an attitude driven by certain ideas. It was difficult to find a term that would include such 'way of thinking'. The concept of 'ideology' was chosen based on the data collected from experts who used this concept themselves.

[70] 'Un traductor puede resolver el problema del idioma, pero no puede hacer nada si hay una discrepancia ideológica y una falta de comunicación determinada por las actitudes de los agentes externos' (Gumucio Dagron)

[71] 'barreiras não estão nas linguas mas nas cabeças' (Gerlic)

[72] Não, para mim o que dificulta o dialogo é tentar se comunicar com a cabeça; se a gente emprende a comunicação como integral, um elo de ser a ser, e se permite, um fluir sutil de toda manifestação comunicante... Flui! Quem se amarra na língua e porque não se abre alem da cabeça e esse é um sintoma do nosso OCCIDENTE.

Aram:	- Generally difficulties come up when we encounter opinions that go against ours
Aram:	- Then the dialogue turns to be a bit difficult because each person is defending his point of view
Aram:	- But we know that we have to be flexible in some cases
Aram:	- Like in the case of an opposing idea, we have to express ourselves really well
…	
Aram:	- The dialogue with non indigenous people is even more difficult for us
Aram:	- Since they have a completely different vision than ours

Author:	- What do you think can make the conversation difficult between a non Indian and an Indian?
Aram:	- Among others, the way of thinking and seeing the world.

Aram's comments on the difficulties of dialogue support the experts' views that discrepancy in opinions and different visions of the world tend to make dialogue more difficult. When discussing certain behaviours to adopt when dialoguing with indigenous and/or non-indigenous people, interviewees explain that it depends on the occasion and the interlocutor, since 'even non indigenous people have different manners to talk to each others' (Maya, see Annex E Table 4). It is necessary to **(b) -** consider each particular interlocutor since ideologies may differ individually. In addition, behaviours often change when interlocutors are already familiar with one another, because 'getting related with people we [they] don't know is generally more difficult' (Xandaopank, see Annex E Table 4). Thus, it can be argued that there is a great need for **(c) -** respect, knowledge and readiness for changes between interlocutors with different ideas and opinions. An attitude of **(d) -** opening and listening is agreed and strongly recommended. Coan and Aram from the Pankararu community state:

Coanpank:	- Above all, respect is essential
Aram:	- We have to take into account that we don't all think the same way
Coanpank:	- Respect of the other, his rights
Aram:	- Then we respect the others' opinions, so that they respect ours

Aram:	- Knowing how to cope with differences in thinking, everyone has something to defend and an opinion to express

Experts, Thydêwas Director and indigenous people all mention challenges related to differences in visions, ideologies and thinking during the interviews. Although it is difficult to identify specific situations, results of the study show that differences in ideologies can

severely affect the process of dialogue.[73] Differences in ideologies can generate misunderstandings and may also create conflicts. It is important for practitioners to **(e) -** bear in mind that they do not necessarily share the same ideas as communities, and above all that their opinions and ideas might not be accepted. In this way, Ledwith (2005) accurately highlights that it is by 'challenging the way we see the world that we open ourselves to new worldviews, new possibilities for creating a world that is just, sustainable, and non-violent, and this new understanding, in turn, changes the way we live our lives' (Ledwith, 2005: 6). **(f)** - An exchange has to occur in order for development practitioners to build something with the community they are working together towards a project. As outlined by the Indian Coanpank in the above extract, this building process has to be made with respect. [74]

Finally, the topic of *good* and *bad* intentions is highlighted in many conversations between indigenous participants and the author. Interviewees did not always make a clear distinction between development practitioners and non indigenous people in-general.[75] Maya explains: 'there are some non indigenous persons here in my village who try to manipulate', 'people with bad hearts' she emphasises. Further in the conversation, Maya states that 'With people who want to help us there is no problem of understanding' yet finally adds 'but you know that there are bad people everywhere' (see Annex E Table 6). This strengthens the fact that not only ideas and visions of the world but really motivations and intentions have strong influences in development work and can affect the dialogue process and ultimately the effectiveness of projects. Therefore, it is essential for development practitioners to **(g) -** match the intentions for 'their projects' with the needs, interest and vision of the local community and maintain a high commitment. The main recommendation here is to **(h) -** be less project-oriented and more people-oriented.

[73] See another extract of an interview with indigenous people in Annex E Table 6.

[74] See also Buber's theory explored in *Chapter One*

[75] Of course, this statement does not exclude the fact that indigenous people can be development practitioners. In fact, this is the case in the NGO Thydêwas. It is meant here that it was sometimes difficult to make clear to indigenous interviewees to whom exactly the author was referreing to when mentioning 'development professionals' and vice-versa.

3.3 Cultural aspects

Even with use of a common language, awareness about possible misunderstandings, a listening and respectful attitude of the interlocutor, good intentions and high commitment, other challenges are still present. Several interviewees emphasise the challenges generated by differences in cultures and values. This subchapter could have been an entire chapter, including language, ideology and even the following sections about context, community and power. Some would argue that they are all related to the general concept of 'culture'. Without disagreeing, it was necessary to categorise each challenge for purposes of discussion and clearer analysis. The interconnectedness of all challenges outlined in *Figure 3* should be considered throughout this entire discussion, especially in this section.

Cultural Understanding

In an interaction between a development practitioner and indigenous communities, the expert Gumucio Dagron describes the 'dialogue of cultures' that takes place between the agent and the local individual. Over time, one culture exchanges and interacts with another, incorporating elements from and lending aspects to other cultures. Emphasising such exchange, Radolf states, 'UNESCO has long advocated that culture is at the heart of development. It is essential to understand and respect the culture of the target community, and just as essential to convey to the community your culture and attitudes'. A further expert, Cimadevilla, also states that 'if culture is the framework of reference through which we learn what is real, what is worth and what makes sense, thus culture is fundamental. Conceptions of the world are always present and condition the readings of the reality and what could possibly be the reality transfigured by an intervention'.[76] Cimadevilla defines culture as 'the basis from where the world is seen as well as what is pretended to be made out of it'.[77] These statements from the experts and professionals demonstrate the significance of cultural factors in the process of dialogue.[78]

[76] 'Si la cultura es el ámbito de referencia a través del cual aprendimos lo que es real, lo que vale y lo que tiene sentido, la cultura es fundamental. Las concepciones de mundo están presentes siempre y condicionan las lecturas sobre la realidad y sobre lo que eventualmente puede ser la realidad transfigurada por una intervención' (Cimadevilla)

[77] 'La cultura es la base desde la cual se ve el mundo y lo que pretende hacerse de él' (Cimadevilla)

[78] Chat sessions with indigenous people also show an awareness of cultural differences (see Annex E Table 7).

Cultural differences exist and are necessary to consider when analysing the factors that influence the interaction between development practitioners and indigenous communities. The communication professional López believes that getting to know the interlocutors and their culture is as or more important than knowledge about the topic and the project. In the case of the NGO Thydêwas, both indigenous and non-indigenous people work within the organisation. This provides the organisation greater cultural knowledge, reducing cultural misunderstandings when interacting with community members. In addition, the NGO Director, Gerlic, an Argentinean, has a deep understanding of Brazilian indigenous culture and provides the following example to explain how this benefits his work. Indigenous people in Brazil typically answer [79]'Yes sir!' to a practitioner's question, making the professional think that they have agreed on something when this is not always the case. For example, the NGO Director describes the following scenario, '- Will you bring me a stone from your house tomorrow? – Yes, sir! And the day after he is not coming, a week later he would show up without anything. I could think that he didn't complete either the deadline nor the objective…But if I don't ask myself about the course of action, if I don't immerse myself in my own process and observe my values, if I don't perceive myself as constituted of a culture that is not better than the other, I could be judging wrongly. We are the only ones who can 'rethink' ourselves'. This example shows the awareness and the importance of looking at the 'Self' from the standpoint of the 'Other', which will be further discussed in this thesis. 'If we remain with hard heads and stone hearts', Gerlic continues, 'none of the Indians will bring me any stones and I will go out of the indigenous world judging them as unreliable people.' The author has had a similar encounter, in which culture influenced perceptions in time, with the Quichua-speaking peoples of Ecuador. The author asked an indigenous person from the Andes how to say 'early', and received the answer: 'it depends if you mean after or before the sunset'. This shows that even languages can be culturally influenced depending on the way some cultures perceive time. Despite knowing a language and being culturally aware, there is always room for astonishment, an attempt to see the world differently and a continuous

[79] 'A cada instante, eu sou sempre eu, carregando minha historia e meus valores. Criado num sistema onde aprendi que a 'cumprir prazos, metas" posso ficar desatento ao processo e ate ficar zangado com uma pessoa que não "cumpriu". Poe exemplo.... Os indígenas foram "obrigados" a dizer: SIM SENHOR! Então pode acontecer que eu acredite estar combinando com um índio.... -Amanha você me trae uma pedra de sua casa? – Sim senhor! E ao dia seguinte nada do índio, só uma semana mais tarde ele vem e de mãos vazias. Eu poderia "pensar" não cumpriu nem o prazo nem a meta... Mas se eu não me perguntar pelo percurso, se não mergulhar no meu processo, se não observar os meus valores,se não enxergar como constituído com uma cultura que não é melhor que a de ninguém, eu poderia julgar errado. Só podemos re-pensarnos ao nos mesmos. Mas se eu ficar cabeça dura, coração de pedra, índio nenhum me trairá uma pedra e eu sairia do mundo indígena, tachando os índios de SEM PALAVRA'. (Gerlic)

learning process. These examples highlight the importance for development professionals of forming an understanding of the culture of the people they are going to work with, including their historical background, customs, beliefs and behaviours and keep learning about them.

Project cycle and Time perception

Taking cultural perceptions into account in the project cycle can also have strong repercussions. Etymological speaking, the word *project* (from *projicere* in Latin) means to 'throw something forwards'. Thus, the term *project* refers to something that will come in the future. As explored in *Chapter 2,* in development work, a project is 'temporary' which means that it has a start and an end date and goes through several phases on a linear model. It is argued that the common word *project* used in the development field can become a challenge itself, like the word *early* in the previous example. A project is designed according to programmes and budget lines, a particular space and time limits. It is also thought to be reproduced in other contexts and at another time. This concept of project is linear in time and space, in which the past is something that has gone and the future remains an illusion. The Andean way of thinking about the time, however, is extremely different. The 'past' is considered to be going forward because it is showing the way based on the lived experience whereas the future is behind because it is not there yet and will take its way after the very moment is lived. In this view, the present is like a convergence of both, in kind of 'cycles' of space-time, not in a linear model (Restrepo Arcila et al (2004: 14-17). Although organisations need to plan activities, it is important to be cautious when communicating concepts like future, planning, impact or sustainability. As the previous examples have shown, the concept of time may have different meanings between different cultures. [80] Therefore, a mutual understanding of the *project cycle* might be difficult to achieve between practitioners and local communities.

Cultural awareness refers to understanding the conventions of the interlocutor's culture that affect how s/he thinks and behaves (Chen, 1998: 252). The previous examples about time perception are one type of cultural elements that may affect dialogue. Still in relation with time, another cultural element differs and affects dialogue, that of 'rhythm'. Andean people do not 'save' time or attempt to achieve as much as possible in the shortest time possible. While

[80] See also Hall (1966)

everything is becoming faster in Western society, the Andes seem to preserve their time (Restrepo Arcila et al, 2004: 19). This slower rhythm should be taken into consideration in development work. In many parts of the world rapid development is a goal. The speed of life is increasing everywhere, with occasions for face-to-face communication often minimised. As these occasions decrease, time to interact with individuals to understand their culture is lost.

Multidisciplinary Approach

Utilising principles from Development Communication (DevCom) and Intercultural Communication (IC) to study development communication, provides more in-depth analysis of the topic. DevCom and IC are two separate areas of study and are rarely presented under a single overview. [81] Both fields are interconnected but have very independent theories. This study reflects on some of potential common challenges. Intercultural communication is generally defined using the two concepts of culture and communication. Hall (1959: 169) even states that: 'Culture is communication and communication is culture'. Over the years, the concept of culture has been extensively defined, broadened, and has become more and more inclusive, considering all interaction between individuals as potentially 'intercultural' (Kim, 2005: 556). Culture cannot only be described; it needs to be experienced, processed, and active. This study regards IC in the context of international development work and argues the necessity of relying on a *multidisciplinary* approach. In order to develop new tools and strategies that go beyond description and analysis, to come up with solutions and changes for communities, there is a need for a mix between disciplines. The field of IC is one of many that need to be combined with theories of development, especially from social sciences, such as anthropology, ethnology, psychology and others. This needs to be done in professional activities, in academic research and in programmes of studies by adding for example IC modules into development studies and vice versa.

Knowledge and Curiosity

Regarding IC, in practice, development professionals may think that they have reached a certain intercultural competence because they have lived in several countries and/or speak several languages. As a development worker, the author experienced that such feeling of being 'interculturally competent' can start growing in oneself although only one first step might have been reached. Beyond the importance of cultural awareness, professionals need to reflect

[81] See Kim (2005) and Mody and Gudykunst (2002) who have compared and combined theories from both fields.

on the relation between and the perception of the 'Self' and the 'Other'. It is recommended to be curious and always interested in the interlocutor. Dialogue is not an end; it is a means to develop better understanding, and as argued by Freire 'dialogue must require an ever-present curiosity' (Freire, 1997: 18). Cohen-Emerique (1989) also agrees that 'the acknowledgment of cultures first implies the knowledge'.[82] For a better understanding of other cultures, knowledge, interest and curiosity are key elements. In the following extract of an interview conducted by the author, indigenous people also emphasise the need for an interlocutor to be willing to learn about the community.

Author:	- If a person comes to start a project in your village, a person from an organisation such as Thydêwas, how does it work?
Xandaopank:	- First, we have to know these persons
Author:	- If someone arrives in your community who doesn't know you, how can that person get to know you?
Aram:	- Listening???
Anita:	- I think not only listening but listening in a sensitive way, with the heart
Anita:	- I think that when you know better the history, the ideas of prejudices and disrespect change
Aram:	- And then it becomes easier to understand each other
Anita:	- There is the knowledge of each person but also the knowledge of the whole community
Anita:	- And it takes time to get to know someone. People are full of ideas, thoughts and feelings

Jaborandy:	- I am also very curious about learning other cultures and I like showing and transmitting a bit from here from my people
Jaborandy:	- Everything starts with curiosity and interest…the different peoples who exist in our country are very rich
Jaborandy:	- But not in money!!
Jaborandy:	- In knowledge about communitarian life

The emphasis described in the above extracts is on the need for curiosity and knowledge of the culture of the community (Annex E Tables 8 and 9). One can question whether dialogue is possible if it is based on ignorance, with interlocutors who do not know anything about each other's perception of the world. Dialogue itself leads to knowledge and learning from the 'Other'. General knowledge can be acquired through external sources, information can be gathered, but real understanding starts with dialogue. By going to a community and having

[82] 'La reconnaissance des cultures implique d'abord la connaissance'

read as much as possible about the place, the context and the people, one is certainly more prepared than someone who does not make the same efforts. However, it is through face-to-face interaction that real understanding emerges. Space needs to be given for interaction that is not based on practical things or consensus. Interaction needs to be used as a means of knowledge. Dialogue is a process, but it is also still a tool.

Along the same lines, an anecdote brought up by the professional López illustrates the need for curiosity and interest to build trust. While starting a radio project in Dominican Republic, López explains that there was a mix of Haitian and Dominican people. They spoke different languages, had different customs and in his view, the Haitians were rejected by the Dominicans. Beyond the complexity of the situation, López argues that the way to include everyone was 'to invest time attending religious ceremonies (vudú), eating with them (with no microphones), talking' and 'when several bateyes (communities where they lived) felt that we had no other interest than to support them, they opened themselves and started talking'. This example supports Indians' statements discussed above.

Furthermore, knowledge reduces uncertainty, which is permanent, omnipresent, and experienced by all human beings. There exists a continuous search for ways to reduce such uncertainty.[83] Interacting and getting to know individuals with diverse backgrounds is probably one of the best ways, if not the best one. Looking for information and learning about what is 'different' is a prerequisite for a better mutual understanding. Uncertainty can create wrong assumptions. While interacting with indigenous people about this issue, (see Annex E Table 8) Xandaopank brings up:

Xandaopank:	- Something it would be good to talk about are the myths that have been created among us, a lot of non indigenous think that we indigenous still live fully isolated, and when they enter our *chat* and visit our website they are shocked!
Karotecy:	- Ahaha, you are so right xandaopank!

The above extract shows that indigenous people are aware that outsiders may have faulty perceptions about them. It can be dangerous for professionals to assume that they already know what a culture is like and not to be open to learn about them. [84]According to Bennett

[83] For further discussion, see Gudykunst's Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (Gudykunst, 2003:22).
[84] See also Keesing (1974): culture is not simply a collection of symbols but a 'system of knowledge, shaped and constrained by the way the human brain acquires, organizes, and processes information and creates "internal models of reality".' (Keesing, 1974: 89).

(1998) 'people of most cultures feel respected if the person they encounter knows something about the history of their group, and mutual respect is a major goal of intercultural communication' (Bennett, 1998: 11). Theory and analysis suggest that knowledge of a group's history and culture is important. It is argued, however, that knowledge does not equal intercultural communication competence (ICC).

Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC)

According to Celce-Murcia et al. (1995),[85] intercultural competences involve socio-cultural background knowledge, awareness of major dialect or regional differences, and cross-cultural awareness. Such acquired competences are essential. Even for those who have not had any previous intercultural communication experiences and therefore have limited awareness, other competences are crucial, namely the 'communication competences' (Celce-Murcia, 1995). Beyond these, Chen (1998) defines ICC according to four dimensions: personal attributes, communication skills, psychological adaptation and cultural awareness. [86] Empathy is recognised as one of the traits of ICC (Bennett, 1979, 1986; Yum, 1988 in Chen, 1998). Empathy belongs to communication skills and is practiced when one is projected 'into another person's point of view so as momentarily to think the same thoughts and feel the same emotions as the other person' (Adler & Towne, 1987: 95 in Chen, 1998). Applied to development work, the professional Radolf explains that, 'Being successful in development and communication is more than just academic learning and training. There is a personality component – an ability to be open to new experiences, to empathize, to listen and understand, to be willing to work on a team and cooperate. And most of all, not to be arrogant and to realize that the communities where you are working are also repositories of wisdom gained from their history, culture, experiences and beliefs'. This summarises the major aspects of ICC necessary in development work.

Adequate intercultural trainings can help to compensate for deficiencies. If effectively motivated and well- prepared, professionals can reach a better sensitivity to cultures and

[85] who refer to Widdowson (1990) and Ek & Trim (1991)
[86] ICC is defined by many scholars such as Bennett (1998), Chen (1998, Chapt. 11), Gudykunst (2003), Kim (2001), among others. An overview of ICC can be found in the 'Profile of the Interculturally Effective Person' established by the Centre for Intercultural Learning Canadian Foreign Service Institute (2000).

improve their communication capacities. According to Burgoon (1978), every culture has some guidelines for human conduct that provide expectations for others' behaviours. Those expectancies are thus anticipated and based on social norms and rules as well as individual-specific patterns (Burgoon, 1978 in Gudykunst (ed.) 2003:24). In Bennett's view (1998:14), it is essential to admit that people perceive the world differently; otherwise 'efforts toward understanding are subverted by a desire to "correct" the one who has it wrong'. Although generalisation about cultures and behaviours in such a heterogeneous continent like Latin America cannot be made, it is strongly recommended for professionals to develop a cultural understanding which will allow them to be better 'prepared'. The professional López explains that some seminars about culture for development practitioners are held in Peru; these contribute to better understanding of local cultures. However, such seminars lack the communication aspects. López expresses the need to teach a 'colourful communication'.[87] Intercultural trainings to prepare practitioners for development work could include information on indigenous languages, general knowledge about the area, preparation for culture shocks, power and politeness, general cultural awareness etc. Currently, trainings are provided through 'intercultural consultants', primarily focusing on business clients. Intercultural trainings should also be provided to development practitioners. Very few development agencies have started to provide their volunteers and professionals with such preparation.

Limitations

There is, however, a potentially negative consequence of intercultural trainings. They can make 'interculturally trained' people feel that they know everything about a place and a group of people. Place for self discovering remains important. Intercultural trainings can create prejudices which will be harmful to greater cultural understanding. As emphasised by Welsch (1999), 'If one tells us (as the old concept of culture did) that culture is to be a homogeneity event, then we practice the required co-ercions and exclusions' (Welsch 1999: 4). Training may give too specific information about one particular culture and focus on differences. This would tend to divide people rather than lead to greater understanding. True, open, and authentic dialogue between professionals and community members must be seen as a tool to

[87] 'Creo que, además de talleres de inculturación, deberían pensarse jornadas para enseñar a comunicar a los comunicadores. ... Veo urgente la realización de talleres para enseñar una comunicación "de colores", no en blanco y negro como suele ocurrir ahora' (López)

take advantage of differences of opinions, knowledge and cultures. Intercultural dialogue should not emphasise differences but should be a search for similarities. The enriching potential of diversity between cultures and between individuals needs to be highlighted. Although languages, cultures, perception of time, may differ, all human beings are communicative. Culture is often referred to as 'cultural barriers', 'issues', 'obstacles', 'danger'. Culture should not be treated as a barrier. It takes time to understand and appreciate cultural elements and system of beliefs in a context where time is usually not always available. The 'topic of difference – understanding it, appreciating it, respecting it – is central to all practical treatments of intercultural communication' (Bennett, 1998:2). According to Bennett (1998), the intercultural communication approach is 'difference-based'. Such approach emphasises differences between people from different cultures instead of looking for commonalities. Although Bennett's theories have considerably contributed to the IC field, such lines drawn between groups of people are dangerously divisive. Arguing against the ideas of cultural 'spheres' – or 'lines', Welsch (1999) explains that the traditional model of culture (single cultures) is not only wrong but dangerous; it produces separatism. People in cultural groups cannot continue to be opposed. [88] Bennett (1998) explains, on the other hand, that interculturalists focus less on the differences themselves and more on their influence on face-to-face interaction. This interaction is not occurring between cultural 'spheres' of people but between individuals that share a common humanity. Regarding Thydêwas' position in this aspect, Gerlic states, 'I don't see differences or misunderstandings as problems but rather as opportunities for personal development.'[89] The personal development and experiences of development professionals, such as Gerlic, in communication, can enrich the literature and research in the field, helping to design appropriate intercultural trainings, and serving as a facilitator for other professionals going to the same areas. Experiences should be shared both within and across development organisations. It is useful for all development practitioners to learn more about the experiences of colleagues relating to the communication process between themselves and the community members they worked with.

[88] This will be further developed in 3.5. Community

[89] 'não vejo as diferencias ou desentendimentos como problemas e sim como possibilidades de crescimento'. (Gerlic)

Finally, for a better cultural awareness and understanding, it is best to know a local person and go to visit the community with that person who will act as a sort of 'link'. This is the role Maya is taking on in her community (see Annex E Table 6). Interviews with professionals reveal similar aspects. Radolf explains that he always sees as an advantage to get introduced by a local person, who helps to build trust from the very beginning. The last main recommendation is to spend as much time as possible in the field interacting with people and get 'acculturated'.

3.4 Context

The concept of context is closely linked to that of culture. Context includes non-cultural elements such as the geographical situation, the organisation of the meeting, previous experiences, tensions, fears, networks or the internal structure of the community. The context of the dialogue, meaning the situations in which people communicate, can constitute a challenge.[90] Although alternative models have emerged and participatory communication approaches increased, there is a serious need for adaptation to contexts, situations and people.

As Freire (1997) states, 'People, as beings "in a situation", find themselves rooted in temporal-spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark. They will tend to reflect on their own "situationality" to the extent that they are challenged by it to act upon it. Human beings *are* because they *are in* a situation. And they *will be more* the more they not only critically reflect upon their existence but critically act upon it' (Freire, 1997: 109). The communication process is often defined by the circumstances of the first encounter between individuals. Elements mentioned above that define the *context,* all influence the communication process. The temporal dimension present in Freire's above statement should be taken into consideration. Any action or interaction between people is connected with a context of other earlier and current actions. Previous experiences may create expectations and pose an obstacle to communication. In development work, formerly implemented project in a community creates a 'ground' and possible prejudices for future interaction. **(a) -** Building trust between professionals and indigenous communities is a process based on what each party

[90] In IC theory, the term context is used differently: See Hall (1976), who differentiates low- context (explicit, verbal, direct) and high-context (implicit, nonverbal, indirect) communication.

(both professionals and indigenous people respectively) has experienced before.[91] It is central to **(b) -** know other actors involved and other actions being carried out in order to understand community members' reactions and expectations. [92] Therefore, it is important to **(c) -** be prepared, not only culturally but perhaps *contextually*.

An illustration of this point is provided by the UNESCO Communication Advisor Radolf. While working on a project in Salvador da Bahia's Bairro da Paz, Brazil, it was difficult for him to gain the trust of the Afro-Brazilian community living in that favela. Radolf explains that the community was mistrustful of a local academic institution, 'whose trainers were all white while the community was all of African roots'. In Radolf's view, local people believed that the institution was keeping most of the money and only a small fraction was going to community, which made the community unwilling to work on future projects with other organisations. These contextual elements influence the dialogue process and it is a responsibility of development professionals to address these fears. Radolf reveals that when he experienced scepticism or distrust at the outset of a project, it was usually because the community had previously had bad experiences with partners. This finding confirms the need for knowledge about the general context when starting an interaction.

In IC, scholars place emphasis on contextual factors, interaction is not only between people but between people who belong to particular environments (Chen, 1998). Lack of information influences the negotiation of meanings as well as the understanding itself. Such background knowledge is shared by both interlocutors, which can relate to a word, a previous situation, or a common association of meanings and events. This can be connected to Littlewood (2001), who refers to Clark (1996a & 1996b), and calls this difference in background knowledge, a difference in personal *common ground*. **(d) -** Gathering information about previous experiences and projects, taking them into consideration and acknowledging them during the communication process, contributes to building trust with communities. Again, working with a local person when approaching a community is helpful in reducing communication difficulties.

[91] See also Freire (1997: 60; 129)

[92] An example of this is the presence and work of the FUNAI, an organisation that is 'supposed to be protecting the Indians', but that, according to Gerlic, refuses indigenous people to realise all what is being taken away from them; this organisation interferes in the work of Thydêwas with Brazilian indigenous people. 'Um ORGAO que se diz "de proteção dos indios": FUNAI que nunca quer que ninguém leve CONSCIENCIA para que os índios não descubram o quanto estão robando nas costas deles' (Gerlic).

In the case of Thydêwas, contextual elements need to be highlighted. The NGO Director explains how difficult it can be to obtain the participation of indigenous people in Brazil and emphasises the importance of their historical context, saying 'it is difficult, they have been culturally excluded from any kind of participation, they had to remain silent and were forced to become 'civilised', …to follow models, being alienated to be passive, tutored, considered as useless… years of politicians and anthropologists treating them as objects'. [93] Although this has already been discussed in the previous section, history is a significant element to consider when learning about the general context. Dialogue is not only in the hands of the practitioners. Development agents need to **(e) -** be prepared to face political challenges and a certain fear of dialogue from the communities. Similar to the knowledge of cultural factors, collecting information on the community and getting to know the context is therefore a necessary first step in facilitating dialogue, beginning to build a relationship and establish mutual trust.

Another element of the context that influences the process of dialogue is the right to express opinions. Communication can be severely limited if freedom of expression is not considered as a right in the working area. To illustrate the point, Radolf underlines that in the United States of America, where the professional originally comes from, 'the culture of communication is very individualistic – freedom of expression is seen as a personal right and not as a communal one – and that includes the right to offend … In the indigenous communities of the Andes, freedom of expression is usually seen as the right of the community to make itself heard and not necessarily for the individual to speak his or her own mind'. Contextual factors, such as this, must be understood in order to work towards common objectives.

Understanding the local setting is a key element for all development practitioners. Programmes cannot easily and effectively be produced and reproduced in different contexts. When beginning projects, it is necessary to examine the new context in which the project will operate. This can be linked with what Freire (1997) calls the 'decoding stage' where he recommends to **(f) -** 'observe the area under varying circumstances: labor in the fields, meetings of a local association (noting the behavior of the participants, the language used, and

[93] 'É difícil, culturalmente foram EXCLUIDOS de participar, foram silenciados, "civilizados", "adestrados"... moldados..alienados a ser PASSIVOS, tutorados, considerados de menos, incapazes... ANOS DE POLITICAS ASSISTENCIALISTAS... ANOS DE ANTROPOLOGOS tratando-os como OBJETOS.' (Gerlic)

the relations between the officers and the members), the role played by women and by young people, leisure hours, games and sports, conversations with people in their homes (noting examples of husband-wife and parent-child relationships)' (Freire, 1997: 111-112). Cautious attention needs to be paid to all details that will allow a better understanding of the whole context. The dialogue process has to take directly place in the community.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that context is dynamic and thus constantly evolving. Knowledge of contextual elements cannot be learned once and taken as granted and valid for any encounter with the same group of people. **(g)** - Updating contextual knowledge is suggested before, during and after any interaction.

3.5 Community

Each interaction in development work involves persons with individual personalities and specific interests. This is examined in the framework of communities, particularly in Latin America. Community is one of the potential challenges faced in establishing dialogue.

'Belonging together'

The *comunidad* in Spanish, or *comunidade* in Portuguese, is a strong notion in Latin America. In the Andean region for example, it is accepted that every existing thing or person has a common origin and equal value; a profound respect is held for every element in the world because it is alive (Restrepo, Roberto et al, 2004: 22). [94] When practitioners start a dialogue with indigenous communities, they need to **(a)** - be aware of what such a *community* represents. They are not only a group of people that live in the same village, but people who have a mutual concept of the world and of relationships between things and beings. An interesting element is that in Quechua *suq*, which means *one*, also refers to *the other*. The one is always with the other, which emphasises the importance of duality, like in the Aymara

[94] In Andean families, some animals (the llamas, alpacas and others) are considered as part of the family; the colours and forms also have a profound meaning, elements are all re-created and traditions are maintained. - which defines the concept of *community* with elements that are all part of the same 'family', the community of gods, nature and human beings.

proverb 'everything in the universe is a pair' (*Taqikunas pänipuniw akapachanxa*) (Restrepo, Roberto et al, 2004: 23-24). A person is always accompanied first by his/her *pareja* (partner), followed by the family, the community and the *ayllu* (symbolic family, group living together sharing ethnic origins and culture). *Ayllu* is more of a feeling, a union and complementarities between its members from the three communities of gods, animals and human beings. In the Andean vision, 'to be a person (*gente*) is to have a feeling of belonging to a community that constitutes the basis, to understand its cosmovision and its culture contextually, to act cooperatively, build in common, advance together, think as part and as all and profoundly respect the other, whatever the conditions of life are' (Restrepo, Roberto et al, 2004: 25). [95] It can be referred here to IC theory. Hofstede's research shows that most of Latin American countries belong to 'collectivistic cultures' (Hofstede, 2001). This means that people tend to belong to 'ingroups or collectivities which are supposed to look after them in exchange for loyalty' (Hofstede, 1984: 419 in Gudykunst, 2003:19).[96] It has no political meaning and implies only a great commitment to the group. Although this theory tends to classify people and emphasise differences, it raises awareness about the existence of such groups, the significance of the 'community' and their influence on behaviours of individuals across situations. In the author's own experience, an example of this lies in the traditional ways of working in Andean indigenous communities where work is either collective for a common purpose (road, bridge etc), called *minga* in Quichua in Ecuador. This idea of 'working together' must be taken into consideration when working in development in the Andes. A development project is to be carried out by all people in the community, which illustrates even more the need for involvement of the communities.

Interviews with Brazilian Indians reveal significant parallels to indigenous communities from the Andes in this aspect. Utterances such as 'our community' and 'we' were often used during the interviews with Brazilian Indians, whereas 'I' or 'my family' were almost not mentioned (See Annex E). The notion of belonging to a group is also reflected in Maya's utterance '*all together*' and '*voice of the community'* (see Annex E Table 10). Awareness of this notion is crucial for communication in development work because addressing someone often means

[95] 'El ser gente es tener un sentido de pertenencia a una comunidad de la cual es su base, entender su cosmovision y su cultura contextualmente, ser cooperativo, construir en conjunto, avanzar juntos, pensar como parte y como todo y respetar profundamente al otro, cualquiera sea su condicion de vida' (Restrepo, Roberto et al, 2004: 25).

[96] This dimension of cross-cultural variations has been extensively researched (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Triandis, 1995). See Kim (2005: 557)

addressing the community, beings all belonging together.[97] In order to assess the challenge of 'addressing a community', the author questioned participants on the way development practitioners approach their community and/or individuals (See Annex E Table 10). The main finding is that communication flow goes through the *cacique* (chief or leader). This is discussed below.

In the initial phase of the project cycle, the first interaction in the participants' communities occurs with the leader(s). Meetings are then organised with community members where the leader(s) will be 'transmitting the information'. The *caciques* were often mentioned in discussions with the Brazilian Indians. Local leaders are usually responsible for ongoing activities in communities. They act as representatives and they understand the local setting. In many cases, they are the ones who will request support from development practitioners or allow them to start working in a community. [98] Strong collaboration needs to be established with local leaders. Indigenous people interviewed for this study tend to trust their leader (See Annex E Table 10). However, according to Gerlic, it is common to have a *cacique* corrupted by the system, who will stay closed to the professional, trying to 'monopolise' him/her. [99] In that sense, it is always important to **(b) -** bear in mind that the *cacique* is only one single person. Although this person is supposed to represent a large group of people, s/he remains only one individual of many in the community.

Heterogeneity

Although individuals in communities have a shared sense of belonging to a group, every community has internal divisions. It is argued that such divisions have strong implications in the process of dialogue with *outsiders*. Radolf stresses the importance of understanding a community's internal organisation and political structure while working with communities. This is an important component to **(c) -** be assessed by professionals before projects begin. Radolf mentions that sometimes practitioners have to work intuitively to gauge whether leaders are genuinely interested in the development of the community or out to use projects for their own political ends. Experience in the field is necessary for this. Each community is not

[97] This can also be connected to Anderson (1991)
[98] See Yost and Tracy (1997)
[99] 'é comum já ter um cacique corrupto pelo sistema e que vai ficar mais perto para lhe receber e lhe amarrar, lhe monopolizar...' (Gerlic)

just constituted of individuals; it is a complex system with internal differences. Neglecting this complexity is bound to lead to projects' failure. A community is a whole set of interactions, human behaviours and relationships among people. It also experiences changes, competition and conflicts. Decisions can be made in the name of the community and may reflect the interests of one specific group or another. At this point, communication becomes a guise for manipulation. Supporting this argument, Gumucio Dagron stresses that in many communities the power of traditional leaders is anti-democratic and impedes the community to express itself liberally. The professional emphasises that communities are not homogeneous and reproduce several problems of the society in its whole within the community itself. 'In a small community there are the rich, the poor, the demagogue, the opportunist, the exploiters, the corrupted etc'. Gumucio Dagron describes it as a mistake to see communities as something 'pure and angelical'. As a result, the challenge of the development communicator is even bigger because s/he has to first facilitate a 'democratic dialogue' within the communities and then between community and external agents.

Concepts such as *participation* and *empowerment* both involve that of *community*. As argued by Ledwith (2005), community development is the 'initial context for sustainable change. It is founded on a process of empowerment and participation' (Ledwith, 2005: 1). Community participation can, however, not be the solution to every problem or the only missing element. Communities are often more diverse than outsiders tend to believe. It is necessary to **(d) -** clearly identify community factions that may be affected by a common development problem or have a common objective; and **(e) -** ensure that each group can participate and express its own point of view. The challenge is not to talk to everyone in the community but to **(f) -** be aware of the heterogeneity of the group and the importance of the phenomenon of community at the same time. Ideas must be shared; for the professional it is fundamental to **(g) -** be transparent and talk with several persons in each community, maintaining an open and empathetic attitude with all.

Finally, it is important to recognise that professionals are also part of a specific community, which can be called the 'development community'. When entering an indigenous area, practitioners inevitably represent this 'community'; they need to **(h) -** be aware of this 'image'. Community and the concept of power in this sense are closely related. The balance of power in face-to-face interaction between development practitioners and community members

is discussed in the last section. Analysis in the next sub-chapter is mostly based on experts' opinions and the author's personal experience.

Dialogue takes place between individuals. Cultures, religions, organisations, and even communities are not the ones who communicate, people do.

3.6 Dialogue between Equals

Xandaopank:	- In the non indigenous society they still believe that we are folkloric dolls, incapable of organising ourselves and following current technologies
Xandaopank:	- (…) people think we are with skirt, coca, necklace and painted, but they get scared when we start talking equal to equal with them
Canbua:	- Xandaopank, what do you think when non indigenous people come to your village?
Xandaopank:	- If they come with respect, I don't think it's a bad thing. But when they come with the intention to undermine us, this is not good.

In extract above, the conversation between Xandaopank and Canbua reveals a main issue present in development work. It is the persistent *imbalance* between communities, referring here to both the development community and indigenous communities. [100]Development unites partners, not adversaries. It connects people who want to work together to bring about change; people who might be separated by different knowledge and have different perspectives. However, consciously or unconsciously, expectations exist and imbalance persists.

[100] Again here, it must be noticed that it was difficult to clearly differentiate indigenous/non–indigenous and indigenous/development practitioners. The author is cognizant that some elements might have remained ambiguous in the interviews.

Expectations

Development workers tend to expect communities to understand their own perception of the world, their technology, their reason for coming to the community. Or in some cases the opposite is true, development workers will expect communities not to understand anything and assume a teaching role which provides development workers with a sense of security and superiority. Communities also have expectations of development workers which can be very high and anticipate huge changes including financial assistance, or very low with the anticipation that nothing is going to change. This is due to deceptions or failures from previous development programmes (examined as part of the context) or community perceptions that they are viewed as 'incapable' by non indigenous people, as explained by Xandaopank. In some communities these perceptions are based in the historical relationships between indigenous and foreign groups, for example, Gerlic explained, 'white' has remained a synonym of 'thief-explorer' in certain communities.

Dialogue implies **(a) -** a non-judgmental curiosity, from all interlocutors. In general, people begin a dialogue with their own opinions, objectives and expectations, creating what could be called a 'chorus of monologues'. All those expectations are at the origin of an imbalance during the process of dialogue. On building relationships, dialogue, and expectations, Radolf, the UNESCO communication advisor, states that 'if you are seen as a source of money, only, and not as a partner, you will not have honest interlocutors but people willing to say what you want to hear in order to get your money'. Additionally, Radolf suggests that a development practitioner **(b) -** 'should never try to convey to the community that (the professional) has power, because then s/he is putting them in a subservient relationship'. Therefore, a practitioner aiming to communicate at an equal level with the interlocutor(s) should **(c) -** equally share decision-making processes including on budget allocations between the practitioner or organisation and the target communities. If not, a serious barrier to the dialogue process will exist in the unequal control of budget allocations and other decisions. Furthermore, the mere social status of the professional in comparison to the community s/he is interacting with may strongly influence the authenticity of the dialogue. To diminish impact of social status, Radolf recommends that **(d) -** development professionals 'come with an open mind to work together towards common objectives' and stresses that 'getting away from the power relationships is one of the hardest things to achieve. You have to convey the sense of being equal'.

Imbalance

The dangerous assumption of Western hegemony in this fast growing and globalised world may unconsciously influence the idea of the inferior 'Other' creating another barrier to equal dialogue in development. These 'colonial assumptions' are an obstacle to intercultural communication between the 'development community' and local people where projects aimed at. Freire (1997) states, one cannot go to the people 'in order to bring them a message of "salvation", but in order to come to know through dialogue with them both their *objective situation* and their *awareness* of that situation' (Freire, 1997: 95). This power imbalance is the opposite of *comunidad,* described in the previous section, where each being has an equal importance in life. In the Andean viewpoint, there are 'gentes' and not 'individuos' (Restrepo Arcila et al, 2004: 26-27). This indicates that there should be **(e) -** no domination from the one on the other, no 'power' relationships. [101] To illustrate the point, López tells of two types of development practitioners he has seen working in Cusco, Peru: those who arrived, greeted the people briefly, gave their speech, and then left and other development professionals who 'wasted their time' to converse with indigenous people on their problems, even discussing personal matters. López confirms that the latter professionals had a more positive effect on communities. It is recommended for a development practitioner to **(f) -** come with humility, simplicity, and willing to talk to people, so that the community members will most likely be open and interact with him/her. The behaviours used by development professionals when interacting with communities reveals their power position or expectation of those people.

Classification

The participatory approach is an attempt to reduce this inequality that was the driving force in the modernisation approach of development. This is underlined by Fraser and Villet (1994), 'In order to exchange information effectively among researchers, extension workers and farmers, there must be a dialogue among equals' (Fraser and Villet 1994).[102] However, it is argued that a persistent dichotomy still exists; a clear example of this lies in the words used to describe development concepts. Terms such as 'target groups', 'audience', 'beneficiaries' and

[101] People in the Andean region tend to see themselves as equals in the world (gods, animals and human beings), however, not equals in the society or in politics.

[102] This is an online version of the document and the number of the page quoted remains unknown. The full document was retrieved from the FAO website: http://www.fao.org

even ‘developees’, are used to identify groups towards which development efforts are directed. However, it is contradictory and not participatory to see people as ‘targets’ because it indicates a dominant approach. The term ‘beneficiaries’, also denotes a passive connotation and a vertical approach of development. Several other terms are used to identify the poor including ‘the exploited’, ‘the marginalised’, ‘the oppressed’, ‘the excluded’, ‘the unprivileged’ and ‘the dispossessed’. Therefore, **(g)** - a recommendation to diminish the influence of power on intercultural communication between development practitioners and local communities concerns the terminology used. This leads to the question whether there is an appropriate term at all. Yet, do people have to be named and classified? Does a certain hierarchy have to remain? Is dialogue taking place between a ‘developer’ and a ‘developee’? Although terminology plays a reduced role in comparison to the behaviour used by development professionals when interacting with people, it reveals a certain position taken on by professionals when they start working with indigenous communities.

Even the terms ‘community’ or ‘indigenous people’ classify persons into groups, or ‘spheres’, be they cultural spheres or any other kind of classification. Humans believe they belong to different spheres and are either being classified into these spheres by others or themselves. This classification also occurs when people communicate in development work. It is argued that lines tend to be drawn between groups of people, consciously or not, and differences are emphasised. These lines exist, both, between and within development organisations and indigenous communities. Within organisations lines exist for example between development professionals of different technical expertise as well as within the organisational hierarchy. Lines within communities exist between the populous and leaders, the educated and illiterate, men and women, as well as between other social groups of the community.

The challenge for dialogue is that diversity is often seen as a threat, a mode of comparison, a reason for exercising power, or as something to be overcome. These social categories and stratification have been established historically. [103] This shows how traditional or feudal forms of society, later replaced by a social formation be known as ‘modernity’, has influenced development. Modernity and, therefore, modernisation in development has perpetuated a system of inequalities between the privileged and the marginalised often leading to fear and oppression. In postmodernism, ‘issues of diversity are to be embraced and celebrated, and no

[103] For further discussion, see Tew (2002: 14).

longer to be located within implicit or explicit binaries of superiority/inferiority. Instead, this is to be replaced by a more fluid and respectful curiosity, taking nothing for granted in terms of the constructions of 'self' and 'other', and conceptualising both according to a 'non-hierarchical principle of "difference"' (Lash, 1990: 37 in Tew, 2002: 21). In this way, both categories are less bounded, and development professionals and indigenous people are no longer classified and separated into different 'communities'. This is very difficult to apply in practice, and requires **(h)** - a humble attitude. The lines between groups of people are not only struggles of power between rich and poor, or between target and expert. The same dangerous lines exist within organisations and within indigenous communities.

Power-free communication?

'In dialogue there is opposition, yes, but no head-on-collisions. Smashing heads does not open minds' (Tannen 1999:26). Without talking about opposition or collisions, which is not promoted by the idea of development, a certain *imbalance* is still present in the communication process. [104] Can a *power-free communication* be reached? Development practitioners are driven by helping, supporting, and contributing to more equality in the world. However, the assumption that 'their own logic and world view is correct, universal, and applicable to all' is a main challenge for participatory communication (Otsyina and Rosenberg, 1997: 90). [105] The differences in world views and the importance of a change in attitude and perception have previously been discussed but the analysis needs to go further and include theoretical understanding of 'power' relations. [106][107] Power and empowerment cannot be fully understood without a comprehensive and critical analysis of power. [108] The issue of power is central to participation, especially in the decision making process. As argued by Freire (1997), 'when the power of decision is located outside rather than within the one who should decide, the latter has only the illusion of deciding' (Freire, 1997: 160). In a

[104] This imbalance can also exist in terms of knowledge, see Melkote (2002: 429).

[105] See also theory about Ethnocentrism: Bennett (1998: 19 and 26)

[106] Five main forms of oppression can be identified (see Tew, 2002: 38), one of them is 'powerlessness in relation to 'experts' and institutions.

[107] See also Kim (2005: 562)

[108] Since Hobbes's explication of the social contract, many other social and political scientists have explored power in relations between individuals or groups.

participatory model of development, people should not only participate in the development process, but they should also have the power to define it. Weber defines power as 'the possibility of imposing ones will upon the behaviour of other persons' (Weber in Galbraith, 1983: 2). Based on this definition, it can be argued that it is not only imposing a will but also a reality. Re-conceptualising power means it does not need to be repression or terror, in development work, power can exist through decisions that are made between people through dialogue. Participatory development converted the old paradigm of imposing views and modernity into giving more voice to local people, which leads to empowerment. [109] Empowerment is not opposed to power. Its original meaning is to give power to the powerless and implies a process of addressing imbalances of power (Alsop et al, 2006: 2). [110] People with less power, usually among the poorest, are subject to greater vulnerability. The power imbalance has to be seriously considered if the poorest people are to make their way out of poverty.[111]

Furthermore, language and power can be intrinsically connected, not only in terms of terminology, but regarding the language used during the interaction. The expert Brunetti emphasises that in, Paraguay, like in many Latin American countries, one language tends to 'dominate' others. Due to this, many groups remain excluded in terms of communication about politics, education, public health, etc. This is illustrated by Indians in the interviews. Maya, from the Pataxó community, outlines the language challenges existing within the communities, revealing that some indigenous people still hide to speak their local language for discrimination reasons (Annex E Table 1). **(i)** Bilingual and multilingual issues need to be seriously considered in Latin America, this is an important reality that development practitioners need to keep in mind when interacting with indigenous communities. In Brunetti's view, power is inherent in the communication process and flows between interlocutors. This is supported by Cimadevilla who states 'power of the one who imposes the

[109] Three factors can contribute to measure empowerment:
1. Whether an opportunity to make a choice exists (*existence of choice*).
2. Whether a person or group actually uses the opportunity to choose (*use of choice*).
3. Whether the choice brings about the desired result (*achievement of choice*) (Alsop et al, 2006:34)

[110] Efforts to empower can meet with resistance.

[111] In a Foucauldian view of power, it would be wrong to emphasise only on decisions made by institutions since power is relational. Power is inescapable (Foucault, 1980 in Clegg, 2000: 140); and if power exists only when it is exercised, like in Foucault's view, it is a factor that influences the process of dialogue. Whereas power is something exercised by some, consciously or not, empowerment is a process during which communities gain more control; it could therefore even be called self-empowerment.

language is always superior'.[112] On the other hand, Radolf explains that 'if you are in a place where you do not speak the language and are all alone, you are certainly not in the power situation.' These examples lead to the same question rose above of the possibility of a power-free communication. According to Habermas (1981), 'Communicative action is … internally related to symmetrical, power-free argumentation, with discussion on the tenability of points of departure' (Habermas, 1981 in Servaes, 1986: 215). Habermas (1981) believes in a power-free communication and this is also illustrated by Gumucio Dagron's statement in which he qualifies that it would be 'arrogant to think that a development practitioner or communicator would represent an image of 'power' when visiting a community'. Nevertheless, it can be argued that a sort of 'symbolic' power is reflected in the communication process between those interlocutors. This can be linked with Bourdieu who argues that 'Symbolic power … functions 'unconsciously', 'spontaneously' and 'voluntarily' as the legitimating criterion for the existing social and economic power relationships and leads to a hierarchy of cultural 'tastes' and 'ways of life'' (Bourdieu, in Servaes, 1986: 217). Contrasting with Habermas, Bourdieu is sceptical about a possible 'power-free communication'. Hence, if power is illustrated in communication, how is communication supposed to help to break down power-relationships? In the author's own experience in the development field, it is often difficult to ignore and avoid influence from symbolic 'power'. Special events, ceremonies and communitarian cultural activities, can be especially organised for the visit of the practitioner.[113] Important is to be aware of this and act appropriately to limit the power and reduce 'imbalance' or 'distance' represented in these planned events. Power relationships can be deemphasised by the development practitioner **(j)** - remaining as open, empathetic, and human. These approaches limit the barriers of genuine dialogue which can be created by the fact that the practitioner represents an organisation who might contribute to the implementation of a project (representing the 'development community' discussed in the previous section). It can be argued that this issue is not necessarily one of power but one of freedom to think, express, share and connect with people. In that sense, dialogue is a method to breakdown a symbolic distance between people.

[112] 'El poder de quien impone el lenguaje es por tanto siempre superior' (Cimadevilla)

[113] This is based on personal experience in Ecuador. Several examples of such event have also been brought up by some experts.

Finally, this symbolic distance between development practitioners and community members can be better understood by exploring some elements of IC theory. According to Hofstede (1984), *power distance* is the 'extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations accept that power is distributed unequally' (Hofstede 1984: 419 in Gudykunst, 2003: 19). Hofstede's research shows that most Latin American countries have a high power distance index (PDI). [114] On the other hand, members of collectivistic cultures, such as those in Latin America, generally tend to avoid imposing their views on others (Kim, 1994 in Gudykunst, 2003). In accordance with Kim's argument, **(k) -** direct requests are not the best way to communicate in Latin America. The consequences of direct requests in communication can be illustrated by a personal experience of the author during previous field research. The author asked: 'How many children do you have?' a woman in a community answered: '- How many should I say I have?' This discourse was not driven by power or a dominant discourse, however, the explicit directness of the question led to a breakdown in dialogue. This example illustrates the difficulties and serious challenges present in the process of communication. [115] In intercultural relations, including in development work, problems cannot be reduced simply to linguistic or cultural issues. Although interlocutors express themselves in a dialogical approach, the challenge to listen the opinions and ideas from the standpoint of the 'Other' remains. This problem can be lessened if 'those who authentically commit themselves to the people (must) re-examine themselves constantly' (Freire, 1997: 60).[116] The *sender*-oriented communication model has been replaced by a more *horizontal* and participative approach, this evolution in communication has served to flatten the power relations in the development sector (Servaes, 1986: 215). However, without **(l) -** reconsidering the 'Self', a certain domination of the poor can still be present through the control over resources, knowledge, tools by development practitioners and be considered as a type of authority over indigenous communities (Bessette, 2004: 17). Finally, IC theory also helps to understand some behaviour that tends to differ between 'horizontal' and 'vertical' cultures (Triandis, 1995). In horizontal cultures, where the emphasis is on equality, people tend to see themselves at the same level to

[114] Brazil is similar to many Latin American countries when analysing Hofstede's dimensions. See Hofstede (2001) and the website http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_brazil.shtml

[115] In relation with direct requests, similar challenges were observed during the interviews between the indigenous participants and the author.

[116] Communication is also defined by Gudykunst's Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (Gudykunst, 1995). Gudykunst argues that high uncertainty avoidance cultures tend to show rigidity towards the others and not easily tolerate ambiguity in interacting with strangers. This tolerance is central in a dialogue that occurs between *equals* and it is suggested to attempt to manage uncertainty in communication processes.

each other whereas in vertical and collectivistic cultures such as most Latin American countries, people do not place the same value on equality and freedom and tend to see themselves as different from others. Without encouraging any generalisation, it is suggested to **(m)** - remain aware of those tendencies, to further explore, question and test them, especially in a development work context.

Summary of Chapter 3:

This chapter has discussed the main findings of the data collected from experts and professionals in development and communication in Latin America, as well as from indigenous people in Brazil. The limits of the process of dialogue have been analysed on six main factors including language, ideology, culture, context, community and power. Some suggestions for improvements of the dialogue process were explored such as a change in terminology, the implementation of intercultural trainings, and the connection with other fields.[117] The author is aware that the broad question about how to improve dialogue is extremely complex. The relevance of such field of study deserves to be dedicated time and research, which is the objective of the author in the future. This chapter is the result of a deep reflection and a strong intention to reach some change in communication processes of development work.

[117] See all recommendations : Figure 4 Page 66

Conclusion

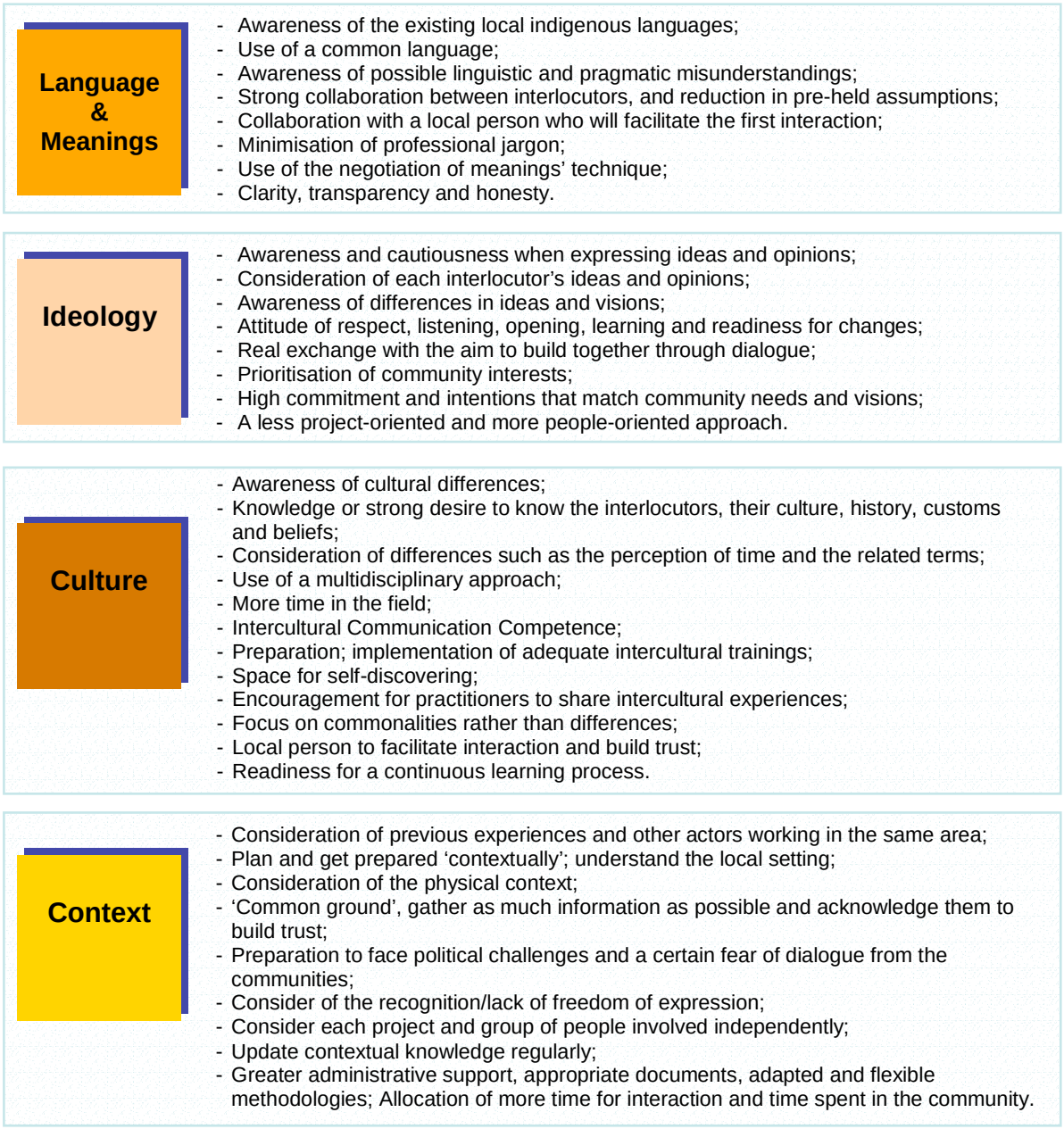
This study aimed to explore the process of communication in Latin American development work. It emphasised the necessity of a genuine dialogue between development practitioners and people in communities. In a participatory approach of development, which aims to involve people more in their own development process; practitioners become communication actors. The mode of approaching a community and the way these development workers interact, determines the degree of participation of local people in development initiatives. The mere intention of establishing a dialogue should prevail over any other project-oriented purposes.

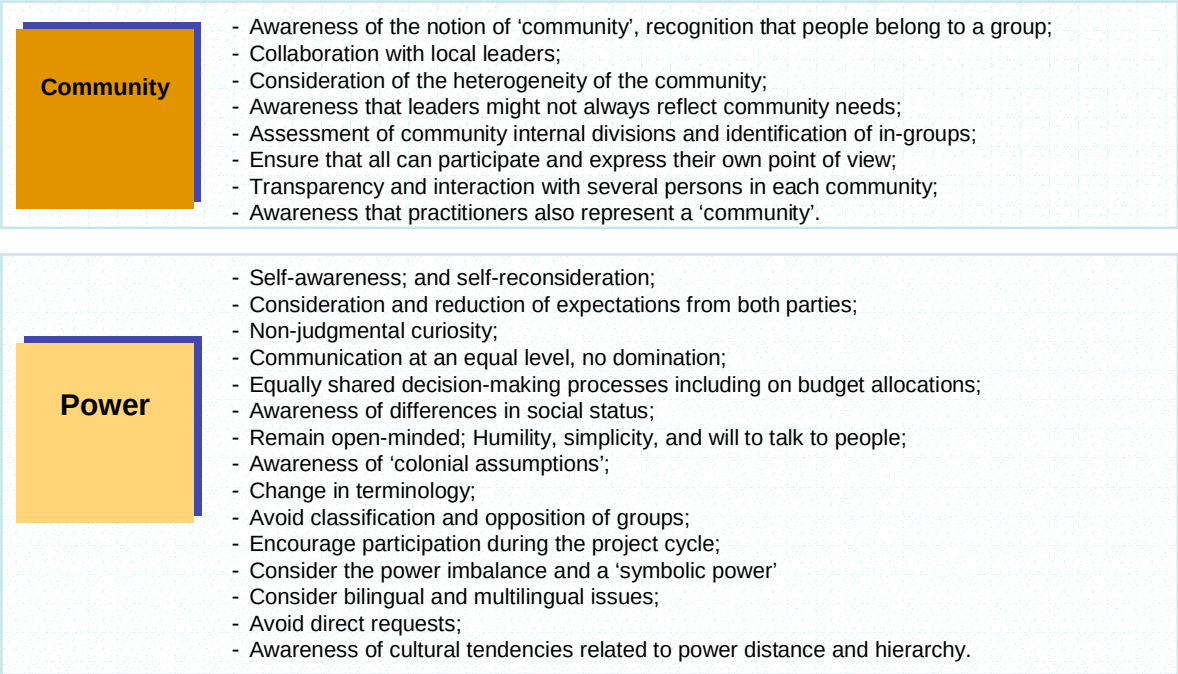
When initiating this research, the author focused on the needs for a more 'horizontal communication', cultural awareness, better mutual understanding and listening to the voice of people in communities. After gathering a great amount of information, carrying out a deep literature review, talking to professionals and experts and interviewing indigenous people; it became clear that the need for dialogue was already well recognised. The analysis, therefore, (1) went deeper in discussing specific reasons why dialogue, if already accepted as essential, is such a difficult process to reach, and (2) made concrete recommendations for improving the communication process.

The findings of this study reveal that a dialogical approach is not easy to reach in development work because of the influence of important factors such as (1) the language used and the difference in meanings given to words and concepts; (2) the difference in ideologies, ways of seeing the world and differences in ideas and opinions; (3) other cultural factors such as the time perception, the way to deal with uncertainty and the existence of cultural prejudices mainly due to a lack of knowledge of local cultures; (4) the context of each interaction including previous experiences of people, their history, the physical context of the conversation etc; (5) the importance of the sense of belonging to a 'community', and at the same time the individual interests of people, the community internal structure; and finally (6) the sensitive question of power, symbolic or not, that creates an imbalance and a distance difficult to overcome in the dialogue process. Throughout the discussion, dialogue was considered as a dynamic process and examined in a holistic approach. The study has argued that the factors that can prevent a mutual understanding and an authentic exchange, are

interconnected and do not follow any specific order of importance. Collected information from indigenous people in Brazilian communities and experts and professionals in Latin America served as a basis for analysis of the six above-mentioned major themes. They were discussed and analysed according to theories from several fields such as Intercultural Communication, Sociology, Development and Anthropology. A series of recommendations was made; they are summarised below.

Figure 4: Main recommendations to improve dialogue





All these recommendations have been discussed in the study. In *Figure 4*, suggestions are presented in a linear way in order to give a general overview and keep the structure used in the analysis. However, the holistic approach taken in examining the challenges needs to be maintained.

The author is cognisant that limitations in the selected methodology may have biased the results. Firstly, the participants in the research and their ideas do not reflect the reality of the totality of the Latin American continent. Not only because it was not possible to carry out a large-scale investigation but because each country, each community, each project, each person faces different problems and challenges. Latin America is an extremely diverse continent with an extensive amount of languages and an extraordinary variety of people. Within one same country, from Amazonian to the Andes, from the Pacific to the Atlantic coast, from the Caribbean to the Patagonia, communities have different ways of life, cultures, traditions, beliefs, and consequently different visions of the world, different needs and ways of interacting. Communication occurs differently according to contexts and people and is not easy to assess. Although generalisations of the findings of this study cannot easily be made, similar challenges can be found in different contexts.

Furthermore, within the text, the author attempted to clarify meanings of terms and concepts in order to provide a degree of coherence and narrative flow. Confusion in terminology is largely present in the development communication field and the researcher is cognisant that some contradictions may have remained in this thesis or that some of the terms have been only partially explored. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the ideas that have driven this study remain transparent, allowing the possibility for others to react and encouraging more people to explore this field of study. Further research could investigate more in depth one of the six themes developed in this thesis, explore the best way to prepare practitioners before interacting with indigenous communities and develop specific contents and methodologies for intercultural trainings.

Any study that expresses a call for change and action, especially in the area of development, involves taking a position, looking critically at existing approaches and claiming for better solutions. In choosing a broad topic and combining theories from different fields, it was the author's intention to pull out common, interconnecting themes. Many people work to affect change in development and yet no one holds a singular solution. This is not because of a wrong approach, but perhaps simply because there is not one perfect model. The aim of this thesis was not to challenge what is done by others and come up with better recommendations, but rather to raise questions, to understand, analyse and explore intercultural communication and development under a single overview. This academic work is the result of a reflection about ways to improve dialogue, not in the sense of some final conclusion and definitive solutions but as a point of departure for new questions and reflections about dialogue, based on challenges that are anchored in humanity. This thesis constitutes the start of a long personal reflection that drives a strong aspiration to work in the field of development and a fight against social injustice, starting from the genuine process of interacting between human beings.

"Dialogue cannot exist in the absence of a profound love for the world and for the people."

Paulo Freire (1997: 70)

Annex A

Experts and professionals who directly participated in the study:

Brunetti, Vicente	Researcher and International Consultant in Communication and Education	Paraguay
Cimadevilla, Gustavo	Expert in Communication and Development, Researcher and Professor at the *Universidad Nacional de Rio Cuarto*	Argentina
Gascón, Felip	Director of the Communication Department of the *Universidad Playa Ancha*	Chile
López Vigil, José Ignacio	Director of *Radialistas apasionadas y apasionados*, expert in communication and media in Latin America	Peru
Gumucio Dagron, Alfonso	Managing Director of the Communication for Social Change Consortium	Bolivia
Castellón Prudencio, Nancy	Project Coordinator, *Centro de Programas de Comunicación*	Bolivia
Gerlic, Sebastián	Director of Thydêwas (NGO)	Brazil
Radolf, Andrew	UNESCO Communication Advisor for Latin America	Ecuador

Experts and professionals who greatly contributed to the research in helping to get contacts and relevant information:

Aguirre, José Luis	Director of SECRAD (Servicio de Capacitación en Radio y Televisión para el Desarrollo), Universidad Católica Boliviana	Bolivia
Baquero, Martha	UNESCO Programme Assistant in Communication	Ecuador
Beltrán, Luis Ramiro	Expert in Communication and Development	Bolivia

Annex B

Model of the questions asked to the experts and professionals. Information collected remains available upon request (in Spanish for 6 participants, in Portuguese for Sebastián Gerlic and in English for Andrew Radolf).

1 DEFINICIONES

1.1 ¿Cómo define usted el concepto de ***comunicación*** tal como se usa en el campo del desarrollo? Extienda su respuesta explicando el propósito asignado a la comunicación en esta área.

1.2 ¿Entiende usted lo mismo por ***'Comunicacion para el desarrollo'*** y '***Comunicacion para el cambio social***'? Explique y de su opinión en cuanto a la influencia que puede tener o no un nombre atribuido a un campo específico.

1.3 ¿Qué entiende usted por comunicación '***estratégica***'? ¿Piensa usted que la comunicación ***interpersonal*** puede ser ***estratégica***?

1.4 ¿Qué entiende usted por comunicación '***participativa***'y ***'community empowerment'***?

1.5 ¿La palabra '***diálogo***' le parece más apropiada para la comunicación entre los profesionales y las personas en las comunidades durante las fases de implementación de un proyecto de desarrollo? ¿Puede existir un diálogo real? Explique.

2 OPINIONES

2.1 ¿La comunicación es ***'El'*** elemento clave para el éxito de un proyecto de desarrollo? Explique.

2.2 ¿Piensa usted que sea necesario mejorar la comunicación interpersonal en el campo del desarrollo? ¿Se puede mejorar?

Si usted cree en mejoramientos necesarios y posibles, extienda su respuesta explicando cómo se pueda mejorar o/y exponiendo las posibles dificultades.

2.3 ¿Cuáles serían algunos de las cualidades más importantes para ser un 'buen' comunicador para el desarrollo?

2.4 Retomando su definición de la comunicación ***'participativa'***, ¿cómo evalúa usted su importancia en la implementación de un proyecto de desarrollo y cómo se logra?

2.5 SI, Usted visita una comunidad con la idea de un futuro proyecto de desarrollo con las personas en esta área, ¿cuáles serían los principales desafíos o problemas que enfrentaría usted en cuanto a la comunicación con las personas en la comunidad durante las visitas?

2.6 ¿Piensa usted que el '***poder***' - o la imagen del poder - que usted lleva consigo cuando visita una comunidad (en términos de financiamiento del proyecto, decisiones, y su posición de representante de una organización- *power distance* en general) afecta la comunicación interpersonal y finalmente el proyecto? Explique.

2.7 ¿Piensa usted que el idioma/lenguaje puede ser una barrera o una herramienta para el diálogo real? Si usted ya fue confrontado con personas en comunidades que no hablaban el mismo idioma que usted, explique como un '***diálogo***' haya podido realizarse.

2.8 Retomando ahora sus respuestas en las dos preguntas anteriores (2.6 y 2.7), ¿cómo ve usted el 'poder' en relación con el idioma/lenguaje?

2.9 ¿Qué papel piensa usted que tienen su 'cultura' y la de las personas involucradas en el proyecto? ¿Hasta qué punto piensa usted que la cultura pueda afectar o no la comunicación, el proyecto y sus resultados?

3 RECOMENDACIONES

3.1 ¿Cuáles serían los factores esenciales e imprescindibles a tener en mente cuando se comunica durante la identificación, la implementación y el seguimiento de un proyecto de desarrollo?

3.2 ¿Cuáles serían sus recomendaciones concretas/prácticas o herramientas para mejorar la comunicación entre los profesionales y las personas en las comunidades?

4 EJEMPLOS Y EXPERIENCIAS

4.1 Cuente una experiencia suya, comunicando con personas en comunidades donde se hayan implementado proyectos de desarrollo y donde usted haya experimento dificultades para comunicar. Especifique el contexto socio-cultural, el objetivo de su visita, el proyecto planteado y cuales fueron las mayores dificultades enfrentadas.

4.2 Cuente una situación, un ejemplo (o más) de cómo personas en una comunidad han percibido la implementación de un proyecto/ la llegada de 'encargados' de proyectos. (Puede ilustrar con impresiones personales o testimonios de personas)

4.3 ¿Ha experimentado usted una situación/un proyecto donde la comunicación – o la falta de comunicación –

- fue clave para el éxito de un proyecto?
- resultó ser la causa del fallo de un proyecto o inició un conflicto verbal?

Tal vez existan otros aspectos y elementos que corresponden a su actividad profesional en particular. ¿Desde su área específica de trabajo profesional, cuáles serian sus recomendaciones concretas para una práctica coherente de comunicación y desarrollo?

Annex C

Indigenous people who participated in the chat sessions:

Nickname (chat)	Name	Community
aram	Ronaldo	Pankararu
tanawy	-	Tribu Xucuru
coanpank	Noberto	Pankararu
yemakiriri	Sandra	Kiriri
meuripank	Mari Meroli	Pankaruru
Anita	Ana Paz	origin Potyguara/ currently living in Brasilia
yonanaPataxó	Yonana	Pataxó
jaborandy	-	Tupinamba de olivença
karotecy	-	Kiriri
canbua	-	Kiriri
mayaPataxó	Maya	Pataxó
anaw 0000	Ednalda	Pankararu
xandaopank	Alexandre	Pankararu
kroatym	Kroatym	Kiriri
mara	Mara	Tupinamba de olivença
edmarpank	Edmar	Pankararu
patriciapank	Patricia	Pankararu
yam_sil	-	Kiriri
tauanepank	-	Pankararu
monikpank	-	Pankararu
welton oliveira	-	Pankararu
joatumba	-	Tumbalala Banhia
arainha	-	Pataxó Hahahae
mauriciopank	Mauricio	Pankararu
curupaty	-	-

Only a part of the information gathered from conversations with indigenous people has been used in this study. Data in Portuguese remains available upon request.

Annex D

www.indiosonline.org.br

Quem somos:

ÍNDIOS ON LINE é um canal de dialogo, encontro e troca. Um portal de diálogo intercultural, que valoriza a diversidade, facilitando a informação e a comunicação para sete nações indígenas: Kiriri, Tupinambá, Pataxó-Hãhãhãe, Tumbalalá na Bahia, Xucuru-Kariri, Kariri-Xocó em Alagoas e os Pankararu em Pernambuco e para a sociedade em forma geral.Os mesmos índios se conectam a internet em suas próprias aldeias, realizando uma aliança de estudo e trabalho em beneficio de suas comunidades e o mundo.

Nossos objetivos são: Facilitar o acesso à informação e comunicação para diferentes nações indígenas, estimular o dialogo intercultural. Promover aos próprios índios pesquisarem e estudarem as culturas indígenas. Resgatar, preservar, atualizar, valorizar e projetar as culturas indígenas. Promover o respeito pelas diferenças. Conhecer e refletir sobre o índio de hoje. Salvaguardar os bens imateriais mais antigos desta terra Brasil. Disponibilizar na internet arquivos (textos, fotos, vídeos) sobre os índios nordestinos para Brasil e o Mundo. Complementar e enriquecer os processos de educação escolar diferenciada multicultural indígena. Qualificar índios de diferentes etnias para garantir melhor seus direitos.

ÍNDIOS ON-LINE é uma rede composta por índios voluntários que buscam os desenvolvimentos humano, cultural, social e econômico de suas nações ao tempo que benefícios para todos os seres vivos sem distinção de nacionalidade, raça, cor, crenças... Trabalhando constantemente para seu qualificar e ter mais autonomia a cada dia, a Aliança dos indios conta com a coordenação da THYDÊWÁ, com o apoio do Ministério da Cultura, através de seu programa Pontos de Cultura Viva e da ANAI (Associação Nacional de Apoio ao Índio).

Em cada Nação indígena que hoje participa do projeto, existem indios jovens e adultos, homens e mulheres, que com maior ou menor freqüência se linkam no projeto para desde seus talentos buscar melhorias para suas comunidades e para o Planeta.

THYDÊWÁ é uma associação civil de direito privado sem fins de lucro, legalizada em agosto de 2002. Agrupa hoje índios e não índios, no objetivo de construir um mundo mais justo, humano e amoroso para todos. Através de projetos, programas, campanhas e ações buscamos sinergismos para desenvolver seu caminhar, orientado em melhorar as relações interculturais e a relação do homem com a natureza.

Estamos buscando novos parceiros para desenvolver novas áreas, como a “sustentabilidade” e outras. Precisamos de apoio para colocar internet em outras nações indígenas, para aprimorar nossa técnica e nossa capacidade.

ÍNDIOS ON LINE

ÍNDIOS ON-LINE

É um portal de dialogo intercultural, promovemos a paz e o respeito por todos os seres.
Valorizamos a diversidade.

Caros navegantes, este CHAT é especial.
É um espaço de verdadeiros diálogos. Falamos sempre a verdade.
Temos o compromisso de construir um mundo melhor para todos.
Aqui é um espaço de encontro, partilha e crescimento.

Seja **BEMVINDO.**

Aqui trabalhamos por respeito para todos; por uma sociedade sem nenhum tipo de discriminações, por um mundo mais justo e mais humano. Se seu objetivo é conversar com os índios será sempre um prazer! Se você quiser só se divertir ou jogar conversa fora, por favor, procure outro espaço. Aqui não falamos palavrões, aqui não é um lugar de paquera.

Quem entra aqui assume estes compromissos. Respeite e aproveite!

Usuário	
Senha	
	ENTRAR Aceitando o

Caso seja sua primeira vez no chat, escolha um nome de usuário, senha e click em ENTRAR, coloque uma senha facil para não esquecer depois.

Esqueceu sua senha? Mande-nos um email com seu nome de usuário,
arcodigital@terra.com.br

THYDEWAS

o ARCO DIGITAL é uma COMUNIDADE COOLABORATIVA de APRENDIZAGEM com mais de 100 indigenas INTERAGINDO a favor do DESENVOLVIMENTO de suas COMUNIDADES projeto na integra +

M@IS dI@LOGo !

...A COMUNICAÇÃO...O DIALOGO...A PERCEPÇÃO DO 'OUTRO'... ...COMO CHEGAM OS PROJETOS NA SUAS ALDEIAS?... COMO E QUANTO VOCES PAR TICIPAM... SEXTa-feira 25 e Sábado 26 das 10 as 12 CHATS COM DELPHINE

M@IS dI@LOGo !

Alguns de vocês já participaram nas conversas na semana passada sobre a importância do dialogo. Foi realmente otimo, adorei, e gostaria muito de seguir conversando com vocês. Comunicar, falar, dialogar, ouvir .....pode ser considerado como uma coisa natural... mas as vezes pode se tornar tao difícil! especialmente quando as pessoas tem objectivos, ideias, opiniõ es, jeitos, maneiras diferentes de se expressar, de pensar, de se organizar etc..... Seria interessante ver como funciona isso quando pessoas vem nas suas aldeias com a ideia de começar um projecto de desenvolvimento (tipo a construcoe duma escola, a instalação duma radio, etc.). Existe um DIALOGO entre aquelas pessoas e os Indios ?? Que acham?? Como são realizados os projectos e as reuniões para conversar??? Tem exemplos? As pessoas que vem para ajudar as vezes já tem todo planificado ou todo se decide pouco a pouco todo o mundo conversando e participando?? Se quiserem mandar comentários ou exemplos, depois a gente poderia se encontrar no chat para conversar. Adoraria conhecer a suas opinioes!!!!!! E muito importante saber desde a perspectiva dos Indios como as organizacoes podem melhorar a comunicacao e conhecer as dicifultades que todos voces tem durante uma conversa com elas. Fico na espera de receber as suas opiniões e experiências! Também lhes convido pra CHATS na sala de conversa de indiosonline : - Sexta 25 de Maio das 10 as 12 horas - Sabado 26 de Maio das 10 as 12 horas Podem me escrever sempre que quiserem a larrousse.delphine@gmail.com Delphine
Deixe seu comentário

CHAT DE SEXTA!

O que é ser diferente ou ser todos iguais?
Podemos falar das experiências inter-culturais de vocês e tentar de entender juntos
o que é que nos diferencia e o que é que faz que somos todos iguais.

Espero ver-lhes no chat de indiosonline!
Delphine

Comentários:

Comentário de: angaturama TUPINAMBÁ DE OLIVENÇA [Visitante]
boa tarde Delphine,acho interessante debatermos sobre esse assunto porque existe não indio que tenta nos ajudar,mais infelizmente tem parente que não intende e acaba fazendo com que deixemos de pelomento tentar ver o trabalho da pessoa.
e temos realmente que colocar na cabeça de alguns parente que querendo ou não precisamos do não-indio.
parabéns por essa atitude e pode contar comigo nesse e em putros debates que for pra concientizar as pessoas seja elas indias,brancas,negras.
abraços!

Annex E

Extracts of chat sessions with Brazilian Indians – see attached pdf file.

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Author's declaration

The views expressed in this document are those of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect the policies or the views of Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK; UNESCO/Quito, Ecuador; and the NGO Thydêwas, Brazil.

I hereby declare that the content of this dissertation is entirely my own work, except where otherwise scanned, acknowledged, cited or referenced. Information collected through interviews was conducted in Spanish or Portuguese and was translated into English by the author. A copy of the Spanish or Portuguese originals is available on request.

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