

RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF THE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION ON RURAL COMMUNITIES

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Abstract: *In this paper the authors analyse the key elements of communication in order to shape the rural community profiles. An objective of communication is that the public institutions must have knowledge of the needs and wishes of the population, in order to fulfil them. The research methodology used for this study consisted of: consulting the relevant literature resources in the field, quantitative and qualitative analysis of the collected data, observation and interpretations of the relevant data for the rural communities. Following the research conducted, the authors concluded that the implementation of some easily reachable forms of communication is recommended in all communities, because it will significantly contribute to the acceleration of rural development.*

Key words: *communication, means, verbal, written, information*

INTRODUCTION

Communication for sustainable rural development has the objective to meet the new challenges, aiming at preparing the rural residents to use innovations and new technologies. Therefore, the process of communication in rural areas plays an important role in rural development as it creates some strong bridges between local institutions, rural organizations and the rural public, by making the transfer of information using public or private channels.[5] In conceiving, implementing and planning rural development programs, communication and public relations are essential components in planning the establishment of trustful relations and partnerships, through concepts such as vision, commitment, credibility, attractiveness and image.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research methodology used for this study consisted in: consulting the specialized literature, quantitative and qualitative analysis of the means of communication used in the rural area, observation and interpretation of the relevant data for the rural communities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The most popular division of means of communication is into direct and indirect forms of communication. These are established according to the information transmitted:

- *public information* (messages that are coming from public institutions and services);
- *private information* (messages that are coming from the private sector, companies or individuals), used to inform the target audiences. [3]

1. Direct communication (through interpersonal interaction), pass by specialized information and innovations to farmers. This is the best form for communicating information in rural communities, through which contributes to:

- Share visions, knowledge and information between community and rural organizations;
- Implement and coordinate rural development projects;
- Ensure the adoption of innovations and new mentalities among the community;
- Increase active participation in the community projects;
- Support education and increasing awareness to the need of changing attitudes;
- Ensure cooperation with rural organizations and local administration. [2]

a. Interpersonal communication involves direct contact between two or more persons, who find themselves in the same environment and communicating verbally. The advantage of this type of communication is that feedback is immediate.

b. Public communication provides the public with general information forwarded by local administration, which are usually: symposia, meetings, caravans or exhibitions.

- **Symposia** are forms of transmitting information to a public and are appropriate to debate problems that Romanian agriculture is facing, but also to draw new coordinates for the sustainable development of rural communities in the European area. An example of an annual symposium is the one organized by the Faculty of Agricultural Management in May, in Timișoara, named *Management of Sustainable rural development*.

- **Caravans** are forms of touring from village to village for a specific purpose: culture, health, tourism, etc. An example of a successful national caravan in the rural space is the campaign "Together for Rural Health", inaugurated in 2012 and is a project of the Society of Students in Medicine from Bucharest, in partnership with local authorities and volunteers (doctors and medical students). The caravan has monthly editions, during the weekends. This campaign is visible both in the press and in the online environment, where we can find information about the project and caravan. [12](Fig. 1)



Fig. 1. Promotional poster for the caravan "Together for rural health" [12]

- **Press conference** is another form of direct communication, which requires a group of people interested in a topic. For optimal organization of the conference it is necessary to prepare the following: the guest list, press files, sending invitations, promoting the event on press and on Internet, practicing the public speech. [6]

- **2. Indirect communication** has different forms:

a. written and printed (such as: posters, banners, promotional materials, brochures, publications, newspapers, books, reports, letters, official documents, etc.);

b. audio visual: which are registered (on DVDs, CDs, memory sticks, magnetic tapes, cards, films and audio used in media reports); or are on radio waves (radio and television);

c. digital: wired (fax, telephone, cable, fiber optic, computers, etc.) and wireless (mobile phones, tablets, laptops, etc.). [adaptation after 4]

a. Written and printed means of communication:

➤ **Official prints** are mostly public and informative. In Romania, the best known official print is "Official Monitor", presenting new laws and normative acts. (Fig. 2)

➤



Fig. 2. Official Monitor of Timișoara city [10]

➤ **National Rural Development Program (NRDP)** is an instrumental organization of the Romanian government, which facilitates the exchange of information and promotes collaboration at regional, national and European level, for the implementation and evaluation of the development policies. [11]

Information activities of **NRDP** include elaborating and distributing communication materials to local administrations, free of charge, and organizing information and advertising events. These actions are financed by the EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development). The dissemination of good practices appears monthly in these magazines: "*România Rurală*" (Rural Romania), "*Bune Practici*" (Good Practices) and "*Publicația tematică*" (Thematic Publication).



Fig. 3. Publications of the National Rural Development Program [11]

At the regional level, there is "Agricultura Banatului" (Banat Agriculture) journal, published by the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Banat, "King Michael" I of Romania, from Timișoara, since March 1994.

Also, in every rural community there are (or should be) local newspapers, containing information of interest for the community. (fig. 4.)



Fig. 4. Cover of the Agricultural Banat journal. Newspaper "Dialog" of Giroc commune [9 și 13]

➤ **Private prints.** Besides radio and television, local newspapers and publications in the agriculture field are means of disseminating information and awareness-raising of the target audience.

At the national level, there are some publications and newspapers distributed free of charge or for a fee, to those interested in agriculture.

In 2013, it appeared the rural magazine "Agrointeligenta", which still appears monthly, and is bought regularly by agricultural organizations and interested stakeholders. The agribusiness publication is the only one distributed in large edition in Romania.

In Banat region, the most famous agribusiness journal is "Ferma" (The farm). This is a monthly local publication, which contains information about new agricultural technologies and about livestock, reports, interviews and agricultural legislation. (fig. 5)



Fig. 5. Covers of Agrointeligenta and Ferma magazines [7]

➤ **Posters. Banners. Flyers.** In order to promote events are used, in general: posters (in trams, buses and at notice boards), banners (are placed in the most travelled areas of the city), flyers (distributed to an audience who could have an interest in the promoted event or product).

For example, in figure 6 there is a promotion poster for a agro-food fair "Fabricat în România", a banner of the International Exhibition of Local Goods "Banat AGRALIM", and a flyer for promoting the use of local products called "Din grădina ta, direct în coș și

farfurie" (From your garden, straight to your basket and dish). (fig. 6) Usually, the banners are used also in social media and on related websites.



Fig.6 Examples of a poster [8], banner [14] and flyer [11]

b. Audio - visual means of communication

Mass media is a means of communication, widespread among rural community.

▪ **TV shows and programmes.** Mass media, together with family, school and church is one of the mediators of the socializing process, especially by creating patterns of behaviour in family relations in the neighbourhood and at work. Television attracts the audience's attention and delivers desired messages to the target audience.

At national level, every Sunday is broadcasted on TVR 1, the famous **TV program "Viața Satului"** (Village life) and on TVR 2, is aired the **TV show called "Ferma"**, with rural topics. [1]

▪ **Radio broadcasts.** The most listened national channel, which is addressing problems from rural areas, is "Radio Antena Satelor" (**Radio Villages Antenna**). Also, it is found online and can be listened to on the mobile phone, by installing an app with the same name.

At local level, the programs from **Radio Timișoara** put strong emphasis on broadcasting rural related materials (legislative news, information about financial grants for farmers, etc.). Programs with large audiences among the rural population are: "Din suflet pentru tine" (where are made musical dedications, discussed topics of rural interest, with a guest), then "Gura satului" (whose purpose is revitalize Banat dialectal poetry and prose), "Diminețile satului" (contains sections dedicated to traditions, to various interviews and reports conducted in villages in the western part of the country, and for news from the rural life), and "Școala pământului" (with talk shows with a specialized guest, musical dedications and news about new development strategies and trends in agriculture, related advices, etc.). [1]

c. Digital means of communication

The concept refers to online materials, accessible from any digital device and effective in order to obtain real-time feedback, and to promote creative participation from the users. The most familiar examples of new media are: **websites, online news sites, video games, blogs and social networks.** [6]

Mobile communication technology (mobile apps) has quickly become the newest form of transmitting information among youngsters, providing services and an interactive environment.

Mobile application (apps) in general and mobile apps for Agriculture and Rural Development (m-ARD apps) in particular, have a potential significant role in the development process, providing easy and convenient access to information about markets, financial issues, governance systems, to the rural population in a way that in the past couldn't be imagined.

In general, village halls have **Facebook pages** where are posted updates, photos, information, opinions for the community, where the last ones could reply or appreciate the official posts.

CONCLUSIONS

In order to create and implement rural development strategies, it is required a better knowledge of the current Romanian spirituality, for choosing the best communication means for informing the rural communities and establishing relations of trust and partnership between the rural factors.

The key role of communication in the successful implementation of development programs is to facilitate and enhance the need for interaction between different actors involved in rural development.

In the actual context, the most used means of communication in the rural area are the direct ones (direct meeting, caravans, symposia, etc.), but also the indirect ones (radio and TV broadcastings and printed materials).

From the studies carried out, we have found that the best method for communicating information in rural communities is through interpersonal communication.

As for the indirect means of communication, the audio-visual ones have a higher impact on the rural audiences, because the radio broadcastings and television shows are preferred to written and printed materials.

New technology developments offer new approaches and opportunities to broadcast and share experiences and knowledge, through apps, websites and social media.

Therefore, each of the communication means presented in this paper contributes to the sustainable development goals achieving.

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