

1998  
The International Year of the Ocean

# COLORS OF THE SEA

A Celebration of Philippine Maritime Culture and Heritage

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In 1994, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly formally adopted a proposal to declare 1998 the International Year of the Ocean (IYO). According to the world body, the declaration would provide “a window of opportunity for governments, organizations, and individuals to become aware of the ocean and to consider the actions needed to undertake our common responsibility to sustain the greatest common heritage we have and without which we cannot exist.”

To Filipinos, 1998 is made more significant by the fact that it is also the Philippine Centennial. Filipinos are inexorably linked to their maritime heritage, a heritage born out of the country’s archipelagic nature and 18,000 km coastline. Next year, during their 100th freedom anniversary, they cannot but also celebrate the Year of the Ocean.

### The IYO: Protecting Our Common Future

The IYO was proposed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference based on UN Resolution XVII-17 as adopted by the 17th Session of the Intergovernmental

Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Assembly. Throughout the process leading up to its declaration, the IYO enjoyed wide support from member-states of the IOC, UNESCO and the UN. To its proponents and supporters, the celebration is a unique opportunity to increase awareness of the importance of the ocean and coastal environment, and to raise greater political

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*President Fidel V. Ramos of the Republic of the Philippines raises the “I Love the Ocean” sticker during the Convention of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (see related story on page 33) in support of coastal management efforts in the country.*

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TAMBULI—A NEWSLETTER FOR COASTAL  
MANAGEMENT PRACTITIONERS is on its third issue.

Our circulation is now more than 1,000 and our extra print run copies are usually gone soon after printing. We are thus increasing the number printed to 3,000. The demand for information on integrated coastal management is indeed increasing in the Philippines and worldwide. We are trying to fill an expanding niche and are extremely pleased with the response so far. We get many positive comments but we also need good articles and news items to broaden our coverage of the country and some international events. We really encourage you, our readers, to send in useful material. And if you are not confident of your writing skills, do not worry, our editorial staff is willing to assist with corrections and improvements!

We are preparing for the launching of the International Year of the Ocean (IYO) for the Philippines in this issue. The lead article explains what is in store during 1998 for IYO. It seems really appropriate that IYO follows the International Year of the Reef in 1997 since the health of the ocean is the overriding factor we must all be concerned about to maintain fisheries of all kinds, coastal habitats including coral reefs and the many other reasons why a clean and life supporting ocean is essential to life on earth as we know it. It is hard to say too much about the need to protect our oceans because it seems so obvious. Yet, this does not seem to stop us humans from increasing at exponential rates the amount of waste we dump into our coastal areas and oceans. The limit is being and has been reached in many areas and the results will not be pleasant as they become known. Let us wake up and raise these issues to all appropriate levels! Sylvia Earle has said it appropriately in Time Magazine (1997):

“We should all care. The future of humankind is absolutely dependent on the state of the ocean. Without its aquatic heart and soul, earth would be as barren and inhospitable as Mars. It has taken billions of years, but here it is: a planet with a built-in source of life support. With or without forests, meadows and grasslands, the ocean would roll on, full of life. But without the ocean, there would be no forests, no meadows, no rollicking rain-filled clouds, no life-giving winds, no coral reefs, no cod, no people.”

Making issues of coastal pollution and degradation of the oceans known, by whatever means, requires leadership. We as

# editorial

leaders in the movement to manage our coasts must be willing to stand up and inform others about the severity of the problems. This kind of leadership can come in many different forms, but first and foremost, it must start in small ways within our own areas of concern and influence.

In this issue for example, you will read about community-based coral reef management in Bohol and other sites around the Philippines. These efforts all represent leadership at the local level through municipal government personnel and community leader efforts to make small projects for sustainable management work. These leadership efforts involve taking risks by enforcing the law and forming management groups which must stand up to pressure from within and outside the community. These efforts also require long-term commitment which must come from the heart since nobody is paid to pursue these efforts. Our internal drive is what keeps us going to support and implement these projects.

Another theme in this issue is that of communication or more appropriately, “Transformational Communication”, as explained in the article by Flor and Smith. This kind of communication, used to change human behavior for the better, requires another kind of leadership. This creative leadership encourages new forms of communication and provides information in an interactive forum with people. This kind of communication engages people in a two-way process which builds support for positive development. It engages people in their own development and they become better leaders in the process.

Ultimately the leadership test comes with how we live our lives. Sustainable management of resources must involve us all to make decisions which help preserve the coastal resources and the ocean we depend on. In this sense we must provide models for how others can act to improve the coastal environmental situation.

Let us start by sharing our success with others and sending contributions to the Editor of Tambuli. This is one way we can spread our experiences so others can learn from them. We look forward to hearing from you!

Editor

BOX 1.

**MALACAÑAN PALACE**  
MANILA

**MESSAGE**

We Filipinos are blest in a million different ways by the oceans that embrace our 7,100 islands. We are true children of the sea, shaped and nurtured by the sea, which separates us and makes us distinct and diverse as a people, and yet also connects us in the most natural way to each other and to the rest of the world.

I am therefore greatly heartened to note that 1998, the year of the Philippine Centennial, has also been declared by the United Nations as the International Year of the Ocean. This makes 1998 doubly meaningful for us, giving us a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our rich maritime heritage and reflect on what the ocean means to us as a nation and as members of a larger global community. As we approach the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and as individual nations become more and more integrated into one big global community, we will all the more appreciate the value of the ocean as our greatest common heritage and a fragile resource base upon which we will all continue to depend. Let us not forget that we are all, individually as well as collectively, stewards of this heritage.

I call on everyone at the community level, especially the LGUs, to continue pursuing our goal of equitable growth and sustainable development. The Local Government Code of 1991 has vested in you the authority and jurisdiction over many of the resources in the coastal area. I urge you to manage these resources well for the benefit of a greater number of our people, especially our children, and all future generations of Filipinos.

Let us always remember that each of us shares the responsibility for protecting the ocean, our coastal environment, and our future. Support the International Year of the Ocean in 1998, if you love the ocean, wear a blue heart.

*MABUHAY KAYONG LAHAT!*



**MANILA**  
**1997**

November 14, 1997

**Colors from page 1**

visibility for ocean-related issues and their socio-economic dimensions.

In his opening address to the 29th Session of the IOC Executive Council (24 September 1996, Paris), UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor invited UN member-states to include activities that will sensitize

governments, the general public, and the society as a whole to the significance of the ocean to our common future. According to him, the IYO should be seen as a charter for public education regarding the role of the oceans for society. To achieve this, concrete steps need to be taken towards developing an overall plan for the event, a goal for

which member-states of the UN have expressed interest in providing support and facilities.

**Committee on Marine Sciences: Crystallizing the Benefits from IYO**

As the UNESCO national focal point for all activities that concern

the oceans, the National Committee on Marine Sciences (NCMS) recognized in the IYO the opportunity to promote the oceans, particularly the seas surrounding the Philippine archipelago. The 13 member-agencies of the NCMS agreed to develop a framework for an integrated Philippine effort as the nation's contribution to the event, alongside the celebration of the Philippine Centennial, also in 1998. Initially dubbed "*Dagat ... Buhay*" (Sea ... Life), this collective effort is to be submitted to the highest authorities for evaluation, support and institutionalization.

In line with the goal of the IYO at the global level, *Dagat ... Buhay* seeks to:

1. Promote public awareness and understanding of the value of marine activities, and of the sea and its resources, to national welfare;
2. Ensure that the government does all it can to promote the exploration, sustainable use and conservation of the sea.

These goals run along certain themes and cross-cutting issues aimed at providing a sound basis for focusing efforts, clarifying objectives, and engaging stakeholders in the effort, as well as contributing to legislative initiatives. The themes, issues and proposed agency leads are given in Box 2.

### Partnerships for Local Implementation of IYO

"Think globally, act locally," a familiar saying to many of us, cannot

be more appropriately directed than towards marine environmental conservation and coastal resource management in the Philippines. The opportunity to transform an international initiative to local action

participation of local government units, coastal communities, non-government organizations and the academe is fundamental to instituting the call to action.

Local solutions to overfishing, habitat destruction and marine pollution are being sought worldwide as these



is one reason the NCMS and the Coastal Resource Management Project (CRMP) have entered into a memorandum of agreement on the country's participation in the IYO.

As its contribution to the partnership, CRMP will serve as an implementing arm to help the NCMS elevate marine and coastal issues to the national social agenda through the project's media, education and social mobilization networks. CRMP will maintain the official IYO Web page (<http://www.oneocean.org>), which will provide Internet users up-to-date news, calendar of events and other information on the IYO. Print material from the IYO Web page will be developed for widespread dissemination in conjunction with CRMP's ongoing local and national activities.

While the above efforts are proposed to be principally under the aegis of the government, it is obvious that not one agency can do the job well on its own. The

responsibilities are being devolved to the most fundamental tier, the local government. With the passage of the Philippine Local Government Code (Republic Act 7160) in 1991, the responsibility for managing municipal waters up to a distance of 15 km from the shoreline has been largely devolved to local government. With these responsibilities come not only opportunities but challenges: being closest to the day-to-day problems, local government units will have the unique insight and incentive to implement sound practices in coastal resource management. What's more, they also represent the coastal environment's last safety net against total degradation. Without leadership and action on the part of local governments and communities, the coastal resource base that supports economic development in the coastal areas will ultimately collapse.

BOX 2.	THEMES	LEAD AGENCY(S)
	Ocean Resources Living Resources	Coastal Environment Program-Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-Department of Agriculture
	Non-living Resources	Department of Energy, Mines and Geosciences Bureau-DENR
	Marine Environmental Quality National Security Maritime Transportation Recreation and Tourism Weather, Climate and Natural Hazards	Environmental Management Bureau-DENR Philippine Navy Philippine Coast Guard Department of Tourism Department of Science and Technology
	ISSUES	
	Science, Technology and Research Legal Framework	University of the Philippines Department of Foreign Affairs, College of Law-University of the Philippines
	Management of Marine Areas, Uses and Resources	University of the Philippines

- Use phosphate-free washing powder, detergent and other cleaning agents.
- Don't take shells or other "souvenirs" from the beach.
- Pick up any rubbish you see and dispose properly.
- Avoid using water-polluting household chemicals. Instead use eco-friendly substitutes such as vinegar (an all-purpose cleaner) and sodium bicarbonate (a bathroom cleaner/mold remover).
- Report to authorities any illegal dumping or fishing activities you discover.

### A Call to Action: Wear a Blue Heart

The IYO represents a whole year of opportunities to consolidate and focus all efforts in coastal management towards action and implementation. Globally, the mere fact that there is an IYO is already a clear manifestation of the international community's growing concern for the marine environment. Locally, while the effort to protect the marine environment and ensure the sustainability of the ocean's resources is still sadly inadequate, the call to action is beginning to resound into the far corners of the country. In increasing numbers, Filipinos are recognizing the important role that the ocean plays in our life-support system, and as part of our planet's climate system.

But the real measure of the Year's success can only be seen in terms of how much of the public's concern is translated into tangible steps towards a cleaner, healthier ocean. When everything is said and done, the worldwide effort to protect the marine environment could only really succeed if we all considered

proper waste disposal and the stewardship of coastal and marine habitats. The problems are so huge and multifaceted that it is only by working together that we can make a difference.

We should not be afraid to take action. Next year, if you love the ocean, wear a blue heart and follow 12 simple ways to help save our seas:

- Stop littering our planet: reduce, reuse, recycle (especially plastic).
- Read labels on tuna cans. Buy only those products that respect marine life.
- Find out how and where fish at your local market is caught before you buy.
- Use unbleached or white toilet paper—colored paper contains dyes that pollute our water systems and, eventually, the ocean.

- Let your government know how you feel about issues affecting the marine environment. Write local and national officials or phone the newspapers.
- Draft your own Ocean Charter. (Member-countries of the IOC will have their own Ocean Charter which will be presented and adopted in 1998 as a highlight of the



IYO.) Get people in your neighborhood to sign your Charter, then present it to your mayor or *barangay* (village) captain and request that it be displayed prominently in your municipal or *barangay* hall.

- Show you care. Wear a blue heart (lapel pin, pin, earrings, or necklaces) in 1998.



# Transformational Communication: A Normative Approach to Environmental Education

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It has been said by national governments and donors alike in recent years that to effectively change the downward environmental trends in the Philippines and in Asia, we must see a paradigm shift in approach and type of assistance. Indeed, some assistance programs are purposively moving away from time-bound, pilot location-specific, material interventions to sustainable, strategic, non-material interventions. To be true to this shift in approach to environmental protection, information, education and communication (IEC) activities have to be consistent and respond to the observed inadequacies of conventional communication approaches used in earlier environmental programs.

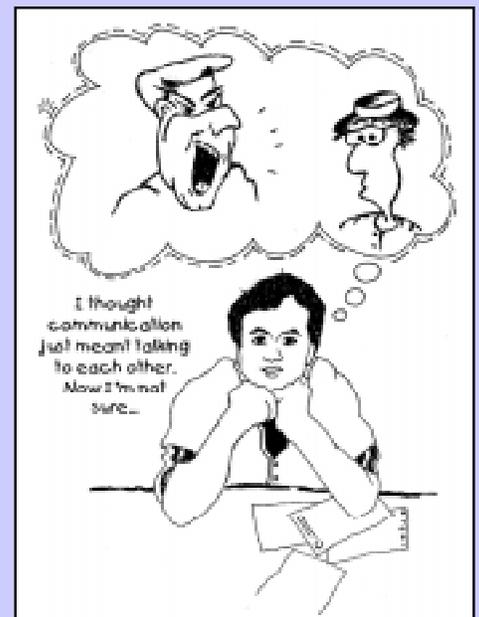
## **The Failure of Environmental Communication**

Program managers, funding agencies, even Department of Environment and Natural Resources cabinet undersecretaries of two administrations, believe that Philippine environmental communication programs in the past have been largely ineffective. Within the natural resources management program of the United States Agency for International Development, this observation has been the subject of a long standing dialogue between

project officers, communication experts in the academe and IEC practitioners (Flor and Gomez 1993). The concerns regarding environmental communication can best be summarized in one question: With all its documented successes in agricultural and health programs, why does communication fail in environmental programs?

In 1993, Cecile Guidote-Alvarez of Earthsavers, an environmental group, expressed the need for

“intelligent, sensitive, comprehensive and functional” environmental communication. She took issue in public affairs programs wherein millions are spent on advertising that does not connect with the



understanding of the fisherfolk or the farmer. She underscored the need to design a creative communication strategy and described as catastrophic the fact that media has not been used as an education tool (in Flor and Matulac 1994). This observation was echoed by Guerrero *et al.* (1994) who felt that environmental communication programs were not participatory enough.

The use of top-down communication techniques and the lack of participation certainly have a bearing on the effectiveness of communication undertakings. However, we suspect that there is a deeper, more fundamental explanation to this.

### **Modes of Program Communication**

In 1992, Neil McKee categorized the modes of development communication into two: social marketing and social mobilization. Our experience, however, suggests four distinct modes: development support communication (DSC); information, education and communication; social marketing; and social mobilization. Although these modes are not mutually exclusive and for the most part overlap, particularly in their operationalization, they represent differing perspectives on program communication.

Development support communication, the oldest of these modes, is rooted in the Green Revolution thrusts of the fifties and the sixties being a direct offshoot of agricultural communications. Endorsed by the United Nations Development Programme-Food and Agriculture Organization and most international agricultural research institutions, it employs communication as supportive to the technical activities of an

organization or a project. DSC units are responsible for the production of newsletters, brochures, leaflets, posters and instructional materials in support of other program components and activities. Up to this day, DSC divisions exist in most international agricultural agencies such as the International Rice Research Institute.

Conventional IEC, on the other hand, is based on the experiences of the health and population sector in the sixties and seventies. This mode contends that communication is not merely supportive to technical interventions but are legitimate social interventions in themselves. In this mode, information is considered as a primary resource; education, be it formal or nonformal, is acknowledged as one of the most viable social interventions; and communication media is recognized as the leading force in setting social agenda. Hence, information, education and communication activities are no longer considered fully dependent on the activities and priorities of other program components.

Social marketing began in the eighties as an offshoot of private sector (i.e., advertising industry) involvement in health and population IEC campaigns. As in the advertising model, the thrust is behavioral and planning is top-down for the most part. Social mobilization, a product of the conscientization school of thought in South America, grew in the nineties as the anti-thesis of social marketing because of its focus on collective action and its bottom-up, participatory approach. Social mobilization is the mode of choice for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's literacy programs and the United Nations International Children's Educational Fund's nutrition programs.

### **Communication in Complex Systems**

As described above, most program communication strategies are based on experiences in the agricultural, population and health sectors. The techniques associated with the IEC and social marketing modes generally employ the behavioral approach, i.e., the identification and promotion of specific behaviors such as the adoption of new agricultural technology; the use of contraceptive methods; or quitting a bad habit (smoking, etc.). Using this approach within the less complex contexts of agricultural, population and health programs posed no problems to communication experts.

The case is different, however, in the environmental sector. With its array of biogeophysical, institutional and socio-economic concerns, environmental programs operate within a complex, dynamic or chaos system characterized by unpredictability and change within its boundaries. In other words, environmental programs possess a higher order of complexity than agricultural, population and health programs thus, requiring a set of higher-order communication interventions.

### **The CRMP Environmental Communication Paradigm**

Given the above considerations and the need for a set of higher-order interventions, environmental programs such as the Coastal Resource Management Project must adopt a wider, more comprehensive and holistic paradigm for environmental communication in its operational and substantive aspects.

They should employ an operational framework that integrates the major communication

modes applied to development undertakings. Such an integration will produce synergy and contribute to sustainability and strategic expansion. This operational framework is shown in Figure 1 with four converging circles representing the four modes. The framework also provides for an imaginary line highlighting the cultural dimension in these approaches.

A program must also employ a substantive communication framework that focuses on normative (value-based) instead of behavioral change. The behavioral approach works well in agricultural, population and health programs but somehow falls short of expectations when applied to environmental programs. There is an infinite array of environmental-friendly and non-environmental-friendly behaviors that may be identified. Applying specific interventions for each behavior in this endless list is not realistic and focusing on a given few

might be fragmented and ineffective from a holistic perspective. Hence, aside from specific behaviors, we elected to focus on norms or values that determine behaviors.

The normative approach suggests three substantive areas of focus: environmental literacy; environmental ethics; and environmental



FIGURE 1. OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK.

advocacy. These three areas reinforce one another and would lead to sustained and consistent changes in our social norms and consequently in our environmental behavior. Figure 2 gives a representation of this substantive framework.



FIGURE 2. SUBSTANTIVE FRAMEWORK.

These shifts in operational and substantive frameworks mean a larger, more significant role for environmental communication which is to **trigger large-scale social transformation**.

### Transformational Communication

“Transform yourself, transform society,” so says a popular poster in the seventies. Transformation is indeed a function of individual and social change. A landmark study of basic Christian communities conducted by the Asian Social Institute gives three levels of community development impetus: individual, social, and transformational. It is this third and highest order of purpose that we feel is most applicable to environmental programs operating within complex systems.

**Features of Transformational Communication.** How will normative changes be achieved? In other words, how exactly is transformational communication operationalized?

At this point, we can say with certainty that transformational communication should have the following features:

#### Multi-level/Multi-sectoral.

Environmental communication should be done at all levels of society: individual, community, and national. Early on, the motto adopted for transformational communication is “*Individual initiative, collective responsibility*” (GreenCOM 1997). It should also involve as many sectors as possible: the Church; business and industry; schools; law enforcement agencies and the military; the media; local government units; nongovernment organizations and people’s organizations; women; and the youth. It should focus on institutional (network) development

and capacity building to achieve sustainability.

**Process-oriented and Synergy-driven.** Changes in norms occur through social processes involving education, collective pressure, shifts in worldview and others. The communicator assumes a facilitative and catalytic role in these processes through social agenda setting, shaping of public opinion, and community mobilization. Oftentimes, these social processes assume a momentum of its own inherent to the dynamics within complex systems.

**Strategic.** Although the intention is to involve as many sectors as possible, logistical limitations dictate that environmental communication should target specific key players within these social processes that would lead to the greatest impact at the shortest amount of time. These key players are referred to as pressure points or

nodes. This can be operationalized by focusing on policy makers and corporate leaders, educational institutions as well as communities with the end view of developing a cadre of leaders that would form the critical mass for the revolution required in coastal resource management. As an illustration, Figure 3 gives a transformational communication network and process configuration.

**Summary**

In summary, transformation communication focuses on institutional (network) development and capacity building to achieve sustainability. Likewise, it does not only aim for concrete behavioral targets but for the initiation of social processes. Furthermore, these social processes should assume a momentum for expansion, a life of their own, so to speak. Finally, the communication approach should be

strategic, identifying pressure points or nodes within these social processes that would lead to the greatest impact in the shortest time.

Observers say that environmentalism should have the fervor of a religious movement in order to succeed. Environmental communication should, at the very least, adopt this transformational feature of religious movements, changing social norms, in order to make a lasting impact.

[This approach, transformational communication, is being applied by the Coastal Resource Management Project of the United States Agency for International Development. It will be very instructive to monitor results as new ground is broken in this emerging field. Editor]

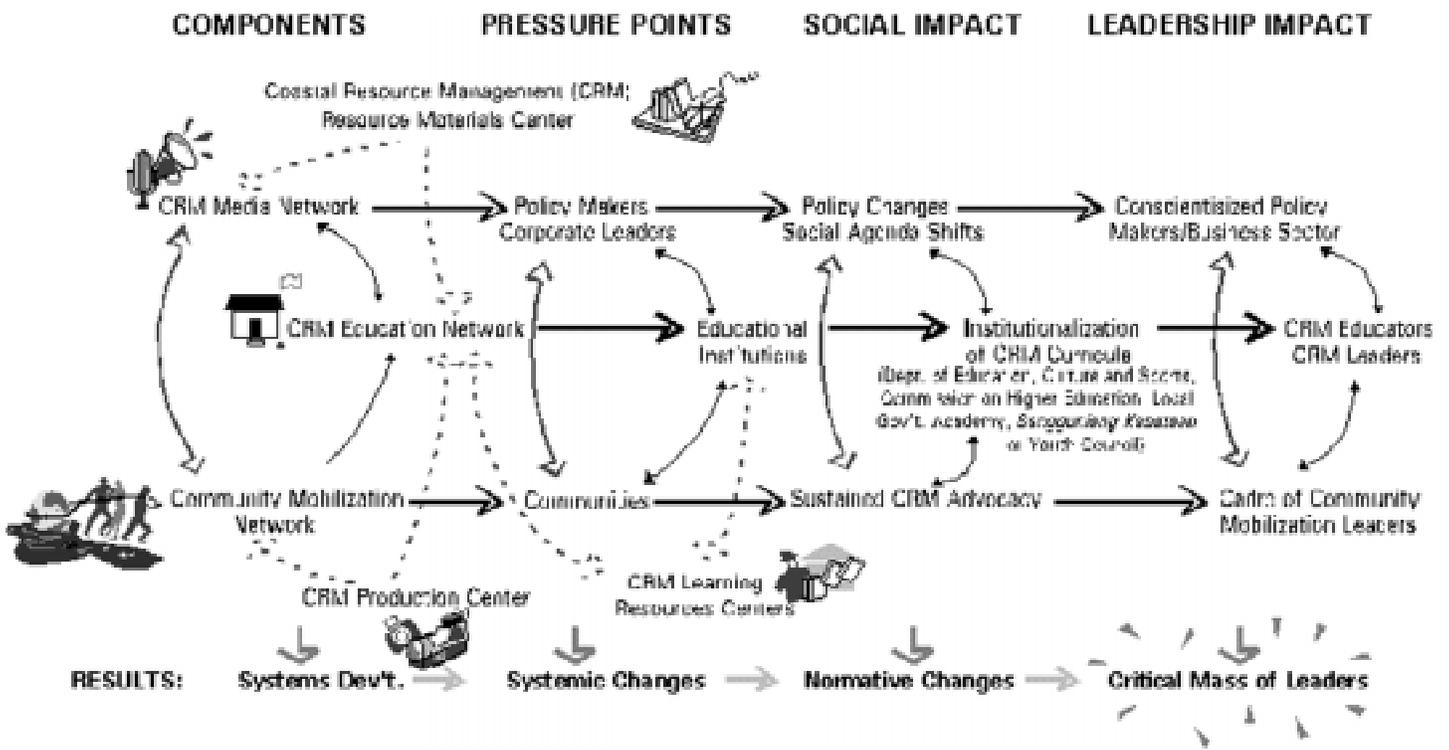


FIGURE 3. TRANSFORMATIONAL COMMUNICATION NETWORK AND PROCESS CONFIGURATION.

## Debunking Myths About IEC

Communication is a pervasive phenomenon that we relate with daily, thus, *everybody is an IEC expert*. Unfortunately, this universal expertise may have been misled by a number of myths.

**Myth:** IEC is merely supportive of other project components or project interventions.

**Fact:** Communication is a legitimate intervention in itself. In fact, many would argue that in projects that aim for long-term behavior change (i.e., population control, social forestry, and even resource management), communication becomes the main intervention. Some would even go as far as saying that the development process is a communication process.

**Myth:** IEC means communication media or materials.

**Fact:** Communication is a process. In a working environment ruled by management audits and performance indicators, it is all very convenient to focus on concrete deliverables and outputs such as posters, leaflets, TV spots or press releases. But the whole point of having an IEC component is to effectively tap the spontaneous and dynamic societal process that brings about social change. We can facilitate, but not substitute, this process with communication media and materials.

**Myth:** The development project, program or organization is the source of information.

**Fact:** We cannot really determine where communication begins and ends nor can we accurately identify the original source and the ultimate receiver. We conduct needs assessments, rapid rural appraisals, and studies on knowledge, attitudes and practices wherein our beneficiaries become the main source of information. The development process may be considered as an ongoing dialogue between the project, program or organization and the beneficiaries, which leads to mutual understanding on what measures to take, and, it is hoped, to social action and ultimately, social change.

**Myth:** IEC is not difficult. It's a relatively minor job.

**Fact:** IEC is far from simple. It requires skills in all aspects of the production process, from planning, visualization and writing to artwork execution and pre-testing. The really difficult part of IEC, however, is trying to accommodate the perceived needs of people who hold different opinions and have different tastes—from your superior, to the subject matter specialist and, finally, to the user.

**Myth:** If the project fails, IEC is to blame. Actually, this myth goes around in a more positive form. “My activity flopped because I had no IEC materials,” “The project failed because it lacked IEC,” “IEC is the key to our organization's success.”

**Fact:** IEC is not the panacea for the problems of development projects, programs or organizations. Nonetheless, people's high expectations are indicative of an increasing appreciation of communication as a social intervention tool.

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