

Effect of Participatory Communication Activities on Land Administration in Rwanda

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Abstract: *This study aimed to examine the effect of participatory communication activities on land administration in Rwanda. It employed the mixed research to collect quantitative and qualitative data and was conducted in Kamonyi District. The study found that the public access land administration related information highly thanks to the current communication activities. Those activities favor dialogue between residents, then between residents and the government staff and authorities at a low level. In addition, residents' involvement in communication activities is low while they participate freely in communication activities and decide to register their land transaction without other influence at a very low level. Therefore, the study recommends that participatory communication activities should be reviewed to favor dialogue, involvement and self-reliance standards by enhancing the use of interpersonal communication channels. Moreover, institution should involve village leaders and community mobilisers in their communication efforts and a formal research must be done to determine views of key publics on the use of social media in circulating land administration related information.*

Keywords: Participatory communication: The use of mass media and traditional, inter-personal means of communication that empowers communities to visualize aspirations and discover solutions to their development problems and issues (Bessette, 2004). Land administration: Land Administration which is the process of registration and dissemination of information in relation to land titles and all sorts of land transactions, as well as the use of land-linked natural resources. This process includes the establishment of rights and other attributes characterizing land ownership and the mode of acquisition, measuring and demarcation of plots, as well as their description (RNRA, 2016). Land Register: A register showing the ownership particulars of each property and any encumbrances registered against the property, e.g. Legal Charge, Agreement for Sale and Purchase, Court Order, etc (RNRA, 2016).

1. Introduction

The land administration system is an efficient tool for the implementation of the national land policy and the land law, which supports economic development. The policy itself suggests that land registry is a tool of reference for an effective land administration system. It says that once the land registry has been established, it will be updated by recording and always taking into consideration all the changes affecting the properties and their owners. This task is fundamental (RNRA,2016).

During and after the systematic land registration, a number of communication activities have been carried out, but still need to be increased since some citizens do not register changes over their lands while this is the only way of updating the land registry which is a pillar for effective land administration. There was a need to analyse if the communication structure and aspects were participatory, identify gaps and weaknesses and propose ways of improvement by integrating stakeholders and citizens' participation in the process of exchanging information and knowledge as well as making decision over the administration of land.

The study will benefit the government of Rwanda which is the over role land manager in a way that it will help

integrating the civil society and the community in the process of updating the national land registry and have updated information on each piece of land in the country. It will contribute to the effective implementation of Vision 2020 and EDPRS2 because it will provide to the government and to citizens a way to exchange information for recognizing, controlling and mediating rights, restrictions and responsibilities over land and resources. Furthermore, it's a solution on how people can learn from their peers, debate about their land related concerns and can exchange ideas with policy makers for an effective administration of land which is an important source of wealth for Rwandans.

2. Literature Survey

This research establishes the relationship between health communication campaigns and perceptions of women on family planning methods in Rwanda. The study looks deeper into how communication messages, channels, managers and target audiences influence perceptions of women on family planning in Rwanda.

2.1 Conceptual framework

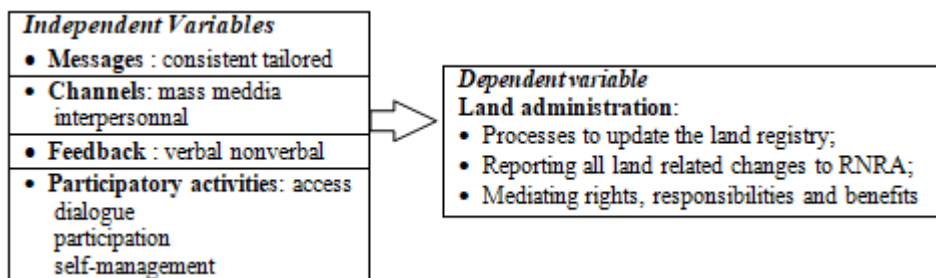


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

2.2 Literature review

Participatory communication is one of the two approaches of communication for development which came up to complement the first one known as diffusion. According to Mefalopulos (2003), this approach is concerned with the process of diffusion and adoption of innovations in a more systematic and planned way. For this Author, Mass media are important in spreading awareness of new possibilities and practices, but at the stage where decisions are being made about whether to adopt or not to adopt; personal communication is far more likely to be influential (Servaes, J.&Malikhao, 2007).

Moreover, participation means that the viewpoint of the local groups of the public is considered that their suggestions for changes in the policy are taken into consideration (Servaes, J. &Malikhao, 2007). This process envisions people’s participation and empowerment (Mefalopulos, 2003).

Participatory communication in land related issues have been successful with the great role played by local government institutions and partners mainly NGOs. According to the UNCHS (1996), local government in the Province of Guimaras Philippines, started by finding out from the community what they needed so that the local authority knew where to build their capacity.

On the other hand NGOs participated in land administration by being bridges between local authorities and the community with respect to the dissemination of land related information, mobilization of resources and participation in the planning and urban management process (UNCHS, 1996), conducting public awareness campaigns, technically advising group tenure arrangements in land administration, capacity building, influencing government policies and programmes,.... This helped in sustaining land administration in India, Malaysia, Philippines, etc.

For the Rwandan perspective, the government together with numerous national and international non-governmental organizations conduct a wide variety of advocacy activities on land related issues. A research showed that communication on land-related issues has been effective in raising Rwandans’ awareness of their land-related rights and duties and empowering them to exercise these rights Land Project (2012). Nevertheless, there is room for significant improvement in the comprehensiveness, and efficiency of these efforts in the second phase of the land policy implementation related to updating the land registry by recording all changes on land. The research showed that the

government reception and incorporating of public input in land-related decision-making has declined and the coordination of CSOs is limited while communications and public education activities on land-related issues are conducted by a wide array of actors, including GoR, CSOs (both with and without an explicit land mandate), professional associations, research and educational institutions.

The communications tools and channels employed by these organizations vary widely, but the use of community meetings and radio programming are central to nearly all strategies. Print materials are generally secondary tools, employed as leave-behind or reference documents rather than core information delivery mechanisms. TV is widely used, but also generally of secondary importance given low rates of TV viewing and difficulty receiving TV signals in rural areas. Phone-based communication (both SMS and voice), internet, and social media efforts are utilized, but primarily for member mobilization and communications within organizations rather than for communication with the general public (Land Project 2012).

The effectiveness of these activities also varies depending on the strategy underpinning the advocacy effort, the issue in question, and the stage of policy development. Consequently, organizations must ensure they are receiving timely and accurate information on land-related policies, laws, procedures and research from GoR and relevant civil society actors. Also, they must be sure they are gathering adequate and accurate information from the grassroots level about how land-related laws, policies and procedures are being understood and reacted to by ordinary Rwandan citizens(Land Project 2012).

GoR institutions participating in the assessment do not appear to suffer from any particular challenges when it comes to gathering top-down information about land policies, laws and procedures; but bottom-up information about how land-related issues arise and are resolved at the local level appears more difficult to obtain. Unlike their GoR counterparts, CSOs and research institutions participating in the assessment generally consider both their top-down and bottom-up informational challenges significant questioning the GoR online presence and the inadequate information sharing and collaboration among CSOs, research institutions, professional associations, and GoR. (Land Project, 2012)

3. Methods / Approach

The effect of citizen awareness activities and understanding of land-related issues is difficult to judge, as few formal studies explicitly trying to link communications efforts with citizen understanding of land related issues have been conducted. In most, but not all cases, the best available information on the effect of specific communications activities comes from the communicating organization's own impressions and feedback rather than a third party evaluation. In this regards I would be very pleased to support efforts by rigorously examining the effectiveness of current communications activities as strongly as possible by collecting information and ideas from the communicators and the community. There was a need to conduct a scientific research on the effectiveness of existing communications activities and how to increase participation for an effective land administration.

In studying the effect of participatory communication activities in promoting land administration in Rwanda, the mixed research design was adopted. According to Creswell (2003), in this design, the researcher collects and analyzes persuasively and rigorously both qualitative and quantitative data; mixes the two forms of data concurrently by combining them, or sequentially by having one build on the other, and in a way that gives priority to one or to both. Creswell further notes that this design focuses on research questions that call for real-life contextual understandings,

multi-level perspectives, and cultural influences; employs rigorous quantitative research assessing magnitude and frequency of constructs and rigorous qualitative research exploring the meaning and understanding of constructs; utilizes multiple methods; and intentionally integrates or combines these methods to draw on the strengths of each.

The mixed design was helpful as quantitative and qualitative data collected during the study complemented each other. For instance, the method was advantageous because while the numbers yielded from quantitative methods allowed greater precision in reporting results, qualitative engagements enabled extraction of in-depth narratives from information rich subjects that enhanced interpretation of the numbers thereby meeting the study objectives much better.

4. Results / Discussion

To analyse the effect of participatory communication activities on land administration, the researcher used five assertions that described the two approaches of participatory communication. Firstly dialogue described by Paulo Freire (1970, 1973, 1983, 1994) , then access, participation and self-reliance described by (Berrigan, 2017). Findings are summarized in the table 4.8.

Table 4.1: Communication activities and their effect on land administration

Assertions	Mean	comments	Std. Dev	Comments
Current communication activities promote access to land administration related information	4.82	Very high level	0.8	Heterogeneity
Current communication activities favor dialogue between residents , then between residents and the government staff and authorities	2.32	Low	1.24	Heterogeneity
Current communication activities involve residence in all the communication activities	2.4	Low	1.1	Heterogeneity
Residents participate freely in communication activities and decide to register their land transaction without other influence	1.8	Very low	1.38	Heterogeneity
Polled mean	2.8	Moderate level	1.13	Heterogeneity

Key: 1-1.8= Very low; 1.8-2.6= Low level; 2.6-3.4 Moderate level; 3.4-4.2= High level; 4.2-5= very high level

Findings from table showed that current communication activities promote access to land administration related information at a very high level because the mean of this assertion was ($\mu=4.82;\sigma=0.8$).The value of the standard deviation showed that the data was heterogeneous. This approach is typical in participatory communication. This implies that the public access information thanks to the current communication activities. Those activities favor dialogue between residents , then between residents and the government staff and authorities at a low level with a mean and standard deviation equal to ($\mu=2.32;\sigma=1.12$). They involves residents at a low level as shown by the mean ($\mu=2.4;\sigma=1.1$). Lastly, Residents participate freely in communication activities and decide to register their land transaction without other influence at a very low level with the mean equals to ($\mu=1.8;\sigma=1.38$). The general level of access and participation in communication activities is moderate with the mean and standard deviation equal to ($\mu=2.8;\sigma=1.13$).

This means that the effect of current communication activities on land and administration reduces significantly

from access to self-reliance. This suggests that dialogue, participation and self- reliance have not been given an important role in communication for effective land administration. This finding supports the idea that Over-riding the unfamiliar information communicated to the people is a bigger problem (IDRC, 2006). Because the development and distribution of information had been centrally planned without any consultation with people and wrong solutions were often driven down to the community.

Consequently, it is a big obstacle because it deprived people of ownership of land administration plans and effective land administration became the responsibility of the government. Whereas land owners prefer to maintain traditional land ownership systems, became side-lined by staff of RLMUA and the district that built the new land registry and dictated its updating principles. One land manager confirmed in an interview that those principles are established and compiled by RLMUA in land administration forms which are sent to them just for implementation or to owners to fill them in request of related services.

5. Conclusion, Recommendation and Future Scope

5.1 Conclusion and recommendation

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that communication influence land administration in Rwanda. This means that communication affects land administration because current communication activities favor access to related information what help residents know their rights and fulfill their responsibilities related to land. Those activities do not involve residents and stakeholders enough. They don't favor dialogue, participation and self-reliance enough what deprives residence of their power of expression, participation and decision making.

Therefore, participatory communication activities in land administration in Rwanda need to be improved to favor dialogue, involvement and self-reliance standards by enhancing the use of interpersonal communication channels to increase people's access to express themselves, the opportunity to be heard and to become part of the land administration related public dialogue. Moreover, institution should involve village leaders and community mobilisers in their communication activities and a Formal research must be done to determine views of key publics on messages and feedback.

5.2 Future Scope

Scholastically, there are many directions in which to conduct further research on participatory communication. As this study examined the effect of participatory communication activities on land administration in Rwanda, further research could be done on the challenges of communicators in grassroots institutions.

It is important to carryout research on the possibility using social media in circulating information for effective land administration.

Finally, further research could be conducted on how NGOs should support government institutions in communicating for effective land management

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