



**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**BACHELOR OF ARTS**

**END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION**

**BAC 2204: PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT/  
PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

*[Examiners D. Mule & F. Waga]*

**DATE: 17<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**TIME: 13:30 – 15:30**

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**Instructions**

1. This examination consists of **FIVE** questions.
2. Answer **Question ONE (COMPULSORY)** and any other **TWO** questions.

**SECTION A (30 MARKS)**

**QUESTION ONE**

**The failure of ‘resilience’ projects in northern Kenya: what can we learn?**

*By Tahira Mohamed and Ian Scoones*

Moving across northern Kenya, roadsides are strewn with signs proclaiming projects creating ‘resilience’ amongst pastoral communities. The ‘Regional Pastoral Livelihoods Resilience Project’, the ‘Drought Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods’ programme, the ‘Resilience Consortium’ and many more. Mission statements talk of creating a “prosperous and resilient community”, “ending drought emergencies” through resilience building, the generation of a “resilience dividend”, linking “resilience and accelerated economic growth” and so on. The resilience buzzword is ubiquitous. But what does it mean, and what are the limitations of the current approach?

In a series of interviews in Isiolo, Marsabit and Moyale over the past few months, combined with an excellent workshop in February hosted by Marsabit-based Centre for Research and Development in Drylands (CRDD) attended by around 30 people from government, NGOs and pastoral communities, we set out to find out. The discussions were not encouraging. Here are a few typical (and anonymised) quotes:

*It's resilience, resilience, resilience in proposals. The word resilience just attracts the donors.*

*We have spent billions and billions, but we have nothing to show, even if we try our best. There's something we are not getting right.*

*We are working on the proposal in the boardroom only, and it automatically fails.*

*The top-down approach means that the suit is tailor-made without fitting the person.*

*We are agents of the problem, not the agents of development!*

There are dozens of projects, millions and millions of dollars spent, with all projects seeming to be designed to tick a series of donor-designed boxes in a welter of development jargon in their documentation. As one frustrated programme officer commented, "These projects are so complex. Even understanding this project, you have to study the booklets. And all those who designed it have gone!"

The top-down, donor-driven approach is of course, not new, but what was perhaps more depressing during our discussions was how 'resilience' projects sometimes even undermine real resilience on the ground, creating dependency, undermining flexibility and squashing adaptability. How does this happen, despite years of experience?

Across the projects we have reviewed (which was a very small subset of them – see

this extraordinary mapping from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa that shows hundreds scattered across the region), there was a fairly standard pattern.

Informed by standardised NGO/donor protocols, resilience projects ideally rely on forming groups (or committees), ideally of women or youth, who may do any number of things. The most common are fodder growing in farm plots, reseeded of pastures, marketing of animals, value addition to livestock products and a whole array of what are termed 'livelihood diversification' projects, involving moving away from dependence on pastoral production. These are combined with investments in market infrastructure, drilling of boreholes and improving feeder roads.

There is nothing wrong with any of these interventions per se; indeed, all are useful in their own way, but do they generate resilience? As some of our interviewees observed:

*You go to a village and there are so many groups – water, rangeland and so on. It's confusing the community. The roles and people are almost the same. They are just funded by different projects.*

*Who is the legitimate committee? There's confusion due to devolution, which is weakening the traditional systems.*

*This word resilience is so ambiguous. We must understand it better. There is a gap – the projects don't work.*

With the emphasis on decentralised activities following devolution, there are many, many groups, many, many committees and, as Leigh Johnson and colleagues point out, the 'labour' of doing resilience (or climate adaptation) is burdensome for many, especially women. The benefits may come in the form of some facilitation for

attending meetings, but too often the projects that are invested in quickly fold as soon as the funds dry up. In turn, the popular cash transfers that are aimed at improving livelihoods may get inappropriately targeted or redistributed in ways that the project designers never imagined.

*This is the first of a series of three blogposts written as part of a scoping study and supported by ACIAR (Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research). Elements of this blog appeared in an article in The Conversation.*

- (a) Using the principles of communication for development, identify and discuss five reasons why this project failed. For each reason, provide an example drawn from the excerpt. **(15 marks)**
- (b) Examine two stakeholders whose contribution was seriously lacking. **(4 marks)**
- (c) Elaborate the development paradigm(s) under which this project would fit. (6 marks)
- (d) Radio for development is the strategic use of this medium to effect social changes beneficial to a community, nation, or region. Within the study and practice of communication for national development and social change, radio has claimed a prominent place in various regions especially in the grassroots. With an example of a community radio, describe five characteristics of community radios. **(5 marks)**

## **SECTION B (30 MARKS)**

### **QUESTION TWO**

- (a) Paulo Freire is renowned for his contributions to critical pedagogy and his belief that education can serve as a tool for social transformation. Identify and describe five key elements of his argument. **(10 marks)**

(b) Communication for development depends on various communication tools to achieve specific development objectives within a project. With an example of a real-life project justify the use of five different tools. (5 marks)

### **QUESTION THREE**

- a) You have been appointed the communication lead in a student team at Strathmore University working on a development project to improve student mental health and wellbeing. Drawing on any **FOUR** guiding principles and processes of Communication for Development covered in this course, describe how you would carry out your role as a communicator. **(12 marks)**
- b) Explain how you would evaluate the effectiveness of your student mental health communication. Use a relevant examples. **(3 marks)**

### **QUESTION FOUR**

- a) With reference to any **TWO** development campaigns, explain why both the Modernization and Dependency paradigms failed to resolve underdevelopment in African countries. **(6 marks)**
- b) Examine **THREE** ways in which Paulo Freire's core ideas align with key principles of the Multiplicity Development Paradigm. Use relevant examples. **(9 marks)**

### **QUESTION FIVE**

- a) Digital communication tools are increasingly being used to support participation and social change among youth and communities in Communication for Development (C4D) projects in African contexts.
- Highlight:
- i) **TWO** advantages of using such digital solutions for C4D work with youth and marginalized communities. **(3 marks)**
- ii) **TWO** disadvantages of relying on such digital solutions in C4D projects. **(3 marks)**

- b) Explain **TWO** ways in which Artificial Intelligence (AI) is strengthening C4D practice in the political and socio-economic sectors. Use relevant examples from any African countries. (6 marks)
- c) Describe **ONE** safeguard you would put in place to protect AI users during development projects in your country. (**3 marks**)