BRIDGING THE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE DIVIDE: EXPERIENCES IN COMMUNICATING IN UNIVERSITIES

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OVERVIEW: LECTURE CONTENTS

- Introduction and Objectives
- Innovative approaches on communication in the university
- Challenges in communication in universities
  Opportunities in communication in universities
- Case study 1: Communicating to the public
- Key issues in public communication
- Summary and Discussion
Introduction and Objectives

• Introduction:
  i) Internal communication - students, lecturers and other employees
  ii) External communication - parents, researchers, policy makers, media
  iii) Public relations - Public relation departments/managers?
Objectives

- To identify innovative approaches on communication in universities
- To propose effective communication in universities to various stakeholders
- To present practical experiences on university communication
- To do SWOT analysis of university communication and develop effective public communication
Innovative Approaches in Communication

Within universities

• Information desks - at main administration, colleges, faculties, departments
• Tele-centers - Information kiosks
• University radio
• Interactive voice response
• E-learning
• Mobile phones and wireless phones
• Internet
(Continued…)  

With other stakeholders/clients
• publications
• Trade fairs
• Mass media
• Public lecturers/ Inaugural lectures
• Public debates
• Peaceful demonstrations; peaceful strikes
  …Mention more approaches ????????…
Major Challenges in communication in universities

- Policy and regulatory framework
- Poor information management
- Inadequate coordination of information based services
- Inadequate resources
- Inadequate human resources
- Inadequate involvement of private sector
- Poor infrastructure
Opportunities for communication in universities

• To refocus resources to information and communication management
• Increased budgetary allocation for physical, human and institutional resources
• Effective and efficient repacking of information for different stakeholders
• Attitude change in university administration and staff
• Formulation of communication policy guidelines in universities
CASE STUDY 1: Communicating to the public

- Electronic media
  - Land grabbing (KTN, October 10, 1997)
  - Documentary on IPM of common beans in Western Kenya (KCB, 1997)
  - Documentary of Bush and climbing beans in Western Kenya (CIAT, 1997)
  - Universities and Trade Unionism (July 2003-August 2005)
• Graduation ceremonies (2006-2008)
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GRADUANDS IMPLORED TO MAKE RIGHT CHOICES
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• RUFORUM Workshop (October 2008)
• GMO debate (November & December 2008)
• GMO seminar (23rd February 2009)
Print media

• Universities and Trade Unionism (July 2003-August 2005)
• GMO Debate November –December 2008
• Feature articles from specialists (GMO Debate-December 2008)
Broadcast media

• Organic agriculture (2003-2004)
• Universities and Trade Unionism (July 2003-August 2005)
• An interview during Workshop on AICM (July 2006)
Key issues in public communication

- Formulate policy guidelines
- Allocate resources
- Active lobby and advocacy skills
- Provide feedback to public communication providers
- Ready and willing to release information and innovations
- Information sources
- Innovative technologies
(Continued…)

- Language the audience can understand
- Current information eg GMO, Food security

More points???????????
Summary and Conclusions

• This is an effective means of communication in the universities
• Its channel is accessible to greater audience, broadcast current information and is relatively affordable as a unit production cost

CONCLUSION: Universities should do SWOT analysis and identify critical strategic issues (gaps in public communications)

• PLEASE NOTE THAT FEW PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN PUBLIC SPEAKING OR ENGAGEMENT