



Strategic Communication Taking Root In Nigeria

Distance learning offers new tools to participants in nine African countries

July 11, 2001—With inquiries about the event coming in from journalists and university professors, the second distance learning course on Strategic Communication for Development drew strong interest in Nigeria. The course lasted six weeks and connected nine African countries - Kenya, Eritrea, Tanzania, Uganda, Niger, Nigeria, Zambia, Mozambique and Ghana- through satellite video.

Presenting certificates to the graduates, Mark Tomlinson, Country Director for Nigeria, pointed out the special role communicators play in support of policies and projects by keeping development messages alive over the long term to help ensure sustainability.



Mark Tomlinson, World Bank Country Director, presents certificate to Mr. Ibrahim Yakasai, Public Affairs Officer of the National Universities Commission (NUC)

Speaking on behalf of the participants, Dr. Uju Okoye of the Federal Ministry of the Environment called on the World Bank to establish a Distance Learning Center (DLC) in Nigeria to enable more Nigerians to benefit from WBI courses and from the state-of-the-art facilities provided in such centers. In the meantime Dr. Okoye's will use his experience to conduct an in-house training workshop on strategic communications in his own ministry using the recent participants as trainers and resource people.

The course aims to provide an understanding of global best practices and offers participants an opportunity to apply these principles to their own projects. Dr. Musa Moda of Universal Basic Education (UBE) explained that "at times we tend to shout at people and think that we have passed a message but this training has taught us that our messages should be client centered to enable us to change behaviors". Dr. Moda said he would start applying strategic communication in his mobilization work in mass literacy and adult education. Pointing to the need for more learning activities Dr. Moda said the World Bank "has brought a big drum of honey and you have decided to smear a little on our lips to lick. We have tasted and found that it is sweet but much of the honey is still in the drum which you are taking away. Let us take along a large quantity of the honey too in our own Jerry cans".



Graduates of the Strategic Communication Course in Abuja

The lead facilitator of the course, Caby Verzosa, from the World Bank's External Affairs Department, congratulated participants for their remarkable achievements. She noted that Nigeria was one of the most active countries in the distance learning program in which some 600 participants from 25 African and European and Central Asian countries



Mark Tomlinson presents certificate to Dr. Musa Moda, Director of Mobilization, Universal Basic Education(UBE)

from 25 African and European and Central Asian countries have participated. She also expressed hope that "this growing network of strategic communicators will all reach out to each other to share their experiences."

The course, jointly sponsored by the Bank's External Relations Department and the World Bank Institute, was conducted earlier this year. Modules included lectures and hands-on activities by professionals from Georgetown University (USA), the University of Minnesota Office of Communications, the Centers for Disease Control (USA), Harvard University School of Government, the Academy for Educational Development, and the World Bank.

The six modules were:

- Building Effective Teams to Communicate Strategically,
- Focusing on the client,
- Selecting Feasible Behaviors,
- Messages and Channels,
- Essentials of Research in Strategic Communication, and
- Design and Presentation of Communication Strategy.

Bank's World Today thanks Obadiah Tohomdet, External Affairs Officer in Abuja, for contributing the article.

Useful links: For more information: [Caby Verzosa](#) or [Yahaya Doka](#).

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