

In this issue (September 2013)

By Florencia Enghel¹

One year has passed since the publication of the Special Issue (No. 17/18) of Glocal Times in collaboration with Nordicom Review, *Communication, Media and Development: Problems and perspectives*. Between then and now, debates about the state of the art of communication for development as an academic discipline have continued in a number of forums. To give but a couple of examples, in January 2013 the Centre for Communication and Social Change, based at the University of Queensland in Australia, organized the conference [“Beyond the Impasse: Exploring new thinking in Communication & Social Change”](#), which brought forward questions raised in the above mentioned Special Issue. And, as we publish this new issue, the [Ørecomm Festival 2013](#), organized by the Ørecomm Centre for Communication and Glocal Change, based at Malmö University in Sweden and Roskilde University in Denmark, sets out to debate the relationship between media initiatives, citizenship and social justice.

Attentive to a threefold understanding of communication for development –as a field of study, as professional practice and as an institutional project, in this issue we bring it into focus from a variety of perspectives: learning, teaching, networking, conferencing and researching.

To begin with, three recent graduates from Malmö University’s Master’s program in Communication for Development introduce their respective theses. Erliza Lopez Pedersen looks into the mediated and non-mediated communication practices of Filipino au pairs living and working in Denmark in the wider context of bilateral relationships between Denmark and the Philippines. Her work is a good example of how to study communication for development ‘at home’ –or, in Teke Ngomba’s words, of how to empirically westernize research. Rebecca Bengtsson discusses the use of livestreaming by citizen journalists in Egypt and Syria, raising questions about the limits and possibilities of civic engagement in the coverage of ongoing sociopolitical events in those countries. Carolina Törnqvist considers the impact of online distribution in the activity of community radios in Chile in the wider context of communication rights and relevant national legislation and international provisions.

In turn, the three articles illustrate issues raised by Anders Høg Hansen in his “Reflections on MA thesis work on Communication for Development”, where he looks back at the evolution of the ‘Project Work’ assignment –that is, the Master’s thesis- which constitutes the last step before graduation for students of Malmö University’s Master’s program in Communication for Development. Høg Hansen discusses lessons learnt, pending challenges and a variety of viewpoints regarding how to strengthen the experience and educational value of thesis work for future students of the program.

Another graduate of the Malmö ComDev program, and an experienced communication for development practitioner in her own right, Jackie Davies, unpacks the trajectory of the [Communication for Development Network](#) since its inception in 2007, and shares valuable insights about the process of facilitating the network, overseeing its growth to date, and imagining its future.

PhD Candidate Valentina Baú follows the thread of communication for development and social change at the [International Communication Association conference](#), which took place in London, UK, in June 2013. By sharing an account of her conference experience, Baú reflects on the somewhat elusive and scattered presence of the academic discipline in the meeting's structure.

Last but not least, Teke Ngomba calls our attention to the implications of the current economic crisis and ensuing austerity policies in Europe and the US for communication for development as an academic discipline. Importantly, Ngomba argues for the empirical Westernization of the field –his is an invitation to undertake research ‘at home’ that merits serious consideration.

We hope that you will find this new issue of Glocal Times both informative and thought-provoking, and we welcome your views on the matters raised here, and your suggestions for future issues.

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