

Community participation and communication processes in the implementation of programs of resettlement of families within the context of urban development in the city of Barranquilla (Colombia)

Participación comunitaria y procesos de comunicación en la implementación de programas de reasentamiento de familias dentro del contexto del desarrollo urbano en Barranquilla (Colombia)

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Abstract

Planning processes of development and growth of the city of Barranquilla have required the relocation of the population living in areas of intervention actions. As part of the implementation of the New Management Plan Territorial (POT), the city plans to revitalize an area around the Magdalena River with a view to improving the quality of life of citizens and to increase competitiveness of the city. The revitalization project is known as project "La Loma".

Under the current Land Use Plan of Barranquilla (POT), the urban development project "La Loma" includes, among other activities, the transfer of a large number of people currently living in this area. For this reason, this article aims to review the current POT and documents from City Council and the Mayor's office associated with the POT and "La Loma" project, in order to identify and analyze the component of community participation and communication related to the implementation of this project.

The results of the documents revealed the presence of regulatory elements associated with community participation. The results also showed potentially useful spaces for the implementation of inclusive communication processes. Therefore, this article proposes a guide for the formulation of a strategic communication plan with a focus on participatory communication and dialogue facilitator to be used during the execution of urban projects that include the relocation of families.

Keywords: communication, community participation, family relocation, communication plan.

Resumen

Los procesos de planificación del desarrollo y crecimiento de Barranquilla han requerido el traslado de la población que vive en áreas de acciones de intervención. Como parte de la implementación del Nuevo Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial (POT), se planea revitalizar un área alrededor del río Magdalena con miras al mejoramiento de la calidad de vida de los ciudadanos y al incremento de la competitividad de la ciudad. El proyecto de revitalización es conocido como proyecto de "La Loma"(1).

El proyecto de desarrollo urbano "La Loma" incluye el traslado de un gran número de habitantes que viven actualmente en esta área. Por esta razón, este artículo tiene por objeto revisar el actual POT de la ciudad y documentos a nivel de Consejo Distrital y Alcaldía asociados con el POT y el proyecto "La Loma", con el fin de identificar y analizar el componente de participación comunitaria y comunicación relacionados con la implementación de este proyecto.

Los resultados de la revisión revelan la presencia de elementos normativos asociados con la participación comunitaria; así mismo, se evidencian espacios potencialmente útiles para la implementación de procesos de comunicación incluyentes. Por lo tanto, este artículo propone una guía para la formulación de un plan de comunicación estratégico con un enfoque en comunicación participativa y facilitadora de diálogos a ser utilizado durante la ejecución de proyectos urbanos que incluyan la reubicación de familias.

Palabras clave: comunicación, participación comunitaria, reubicación familiar, plan de comunicación.

INTRODUCTION

Barranquilla is located in the Caribbean region of Colombia. It stands as the fourth largest and most populous city in the country (2). It lies on the west bank of the Magdalena River. At present, the population exceeds two million inhabitants and is the core of a metropolitan area that includes four additional municipalities (3).

During World War I and the two decades after, the city reached its period of its greatest economic growth due largely to the strong influence of foreign immigrants who developed their business initiatives in various revenue streams of the economy. It became the most important country river, sea and airport port (4).

During the 1960s, due in part to the opening of the Panama Canal, the city suffered stagnation (5). This lowered the importance of Barranquilla as a river port. During the 1950s, migration from the countryside generated a disorderly growth in the city, giving rise to a subnormal planning (6).

In the 1990's, Barranquilla began its economic, and thus urban recovery. New administrations have led the city in the new millennium focusing their efforts on urban recovery of the city (7).

In 2014, the mayor of Barranquilla, Elsa Margarita Noguera de la Espriella, adopted the new Industrial Land Use Plan for the Special District and Port of Barranquilla (also known as POT). The POT was approved by Decree 0212 of February 28, 2014 in light of the challenges imposed by globalization and open markets through free trade agreements. The plan includes "programs and projects to achieve the goal through a system of highly functional and

inclusive pedestrian mobility, bringing the city to the river, recognizing its urban image, complemented with recreational attributes necessary for the transformation" (1).

The POT includes three basic components that support the structure of the Draft Agreement and technical Support document, which are: a) General Component: includes the policies, objectives and territorial strategies for short, medium and long term. b) Urban Component: refers to urban land management and expansion. c) Rural Component: integrates the objectives and strategies of the District policies based programs, actions, procedures and management tools to guide the appropriate use of rural land (8).

As set out in Article 2 of Law 388 of 1997, land use planning is based on the following principles: a) The social and ecological function of property; b) The prevalence of general interest over the particular; c) The equitable distribution of burdens and benefits. For the case of Barranquilla, the POT team established eight axes serving a "Vision City": 1) City region, 2) City River, 3) City equitable and inclusive, 4) green and sustainable City, 5) safe and well-managed City, 6) moving City, 7) City with memory and 8) competitive City. The axes that are associated with the city's urban planning and transformation call for a **fair and inclusive city**, which aims to promote social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions that, improve the quality of life of Barranquilla's inhabitants. In addition, it provides them with social provisions necessary for integration and social balance, with optimal basic conditions for education, health care, mobility and housing, among others (1).

As part of the implementation of the new POT, the city plans to revitalize an area by the Magdalena River that will contribute to improving the quality of life of citizens and the competitiveness of the city. This revitalization process is also known as “La Loma” project (8).

La Loma is a project of 96 hectares, with 55 percent designated for public space, and the remaining 45 percent will be used as commercial, service, residential and institutional projects that will allow a new focus on development and innovation (9). This developmental project will be financed through public-private initiatives (10).

As part of the “La Loma” project implementation, the city is planning to relocate about 80 families that are currently in an area within La Loma called “La Isla.” Many families in these neighborhoods have precarious situations and mostly subsist on economic activities related to growing vegetables (11).

Community participation in Colombia is viewed as a constitutional right. However, community participation in Barranquilla is infrequent (12-13). This makes processes for sustainable urban development very difficult.

Aware of the importance of the community’s participation processes and implementation of effective and inclusive communication plans during the implementation of relocation projects, P.hD. students of Communication at Universidad del Norte decided to perform a review of these issues. This document also proposes a communication guide plan, which could be a valuable tool during the process of relocating families.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

We conducted a theoretical and conceptual review of issues related to community participation and communication plans. Similarly, we conducted a literature review of the city’s main news media concerning the registration of key events associated with the project of “La Loma”. We revised the legal and regulatory framework within the context of the current POT in order to identify and analyze the community participation component. In addition, we reviewed other cases of relocated populations in Colombia. Lastly, we conducted a semi-structured interview with staff of the Urban Development Corporation of Barranquilla and the Caribbean Region of Colombia, Edubar S.A., the entity responsible for the execution of several urban development projects in the city.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theory of communication for social change by Alfonso Gumucio Dagron is the main theoretical framework of this proposal. He defines communication for social change as an ethical communication. For Gumucio, this process is a response to the indifference and neglect, rescuing the possibilities of dialogue that strengthen the presentation of diversity and wills at different levels of society. He believes that the profile of a social communicator has its strength in the dialogic capacity to develop an individuals’ capacity to express themselves (14).

The concept of communication today focuses primarily on a communication process with a more participatory and community approach. This concept highlights the importance of community participation in the communication process and dialogue of equals (15-19).

Gramsci states that consensus is the basis of civil society, while the state's role is to form citizens capable of participating in the political and social system (1).

Patricia Botero Gómez, Juliana Torres Hincapie and Sara Victoria Alvarado (20) emphasize the importance of political reflection in citizenship. Citizenship, democracy and civil society are key words to explain the role of conflict of interest, political action and the exercise of power. It is important to understand that these processes are channels that lead to participation; the formation of movements and social identities.

The process of power and decision-making has changed over time, creating a space where the public can take advantage of opportunities for interaction, communication and intervention, participating in the construction of public policies and intervening via vote in the fate of society (21).

As stated by Padilla, "community participation in actuality is interpreted by the management tools already established by administration, and as a mechanism linking citizenship in the definition and implementation of public policies, as well as its deliberative process, especially in urban areas: mechanisms for dialogue, debate and collection of proposals, the return of their results (22). However, several authors agreed that not all processes carried under this regulatory framework are participatory (23-27).

Population Relocation and Community Participation

At various places and times in the world, relocation of human settlements by exposure to natural hazards, violence, economic

projects or urban development has occurred (22, 28-40). Described below are cases in the national context, which are then contrasted with Gumucio's proposal to highlight the elements that would be key to the successful relocation processes (41).

Relocation in Tulua (Case 1)

In 2004, after families were relocated to the city of Tulua, the receiving community expressed disappointment with unfulfilled promises of using plots of land initially intended for home gardens when other displaced populations were relocated there instead. The community felt that the local government was only interested in getting rid of the problem and did not anticipate how the new inhabitants could assume responsibilities in their homes where they have difficulty learning their economic capacity (42).

The Paez River (Case 2)

In 1994, after an earthquake, approximately 1,600 individuals were forced from their land. The national government created the Nasa Kiwe Corporation, with the mission to ward off the effects of public calamity and restore economic and social order through the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the affected area. This initiative has always been in the hands of the communities in the region, municipal authorities, their community leaders and indigenous authorities (43).

Draft mining in the Cerrejon (Case 3)

This mining project, similar to other mining projects, had relocation processes planned, which influenced the contemplation of community participation by those affected/benefited (44). However, displaced communities

tell their own version of history. Their view of the problem is based out of more visible elements that are cited in continuation and are found in community meetings in La Guajira (45): a) No resettlement plan; b) Air pollution; c) Noise pollution; d) Water pollution of River Rancheria; e) Loss of freedom to work land; f) Loss of fishing usual work; g) Social fabric; h) Losses of direct relations; i) Children's health affected; j) Difficulty in accessing education; k) Psychological impact by false promises and deceit of the institutions; l) Distribution of royalties.

These parallel projects allow us to conclude that involving people at all stages of the relocation process has more positive results not only because their needs are heard, but also because the community can make sure their needs are taken into account. It also allows foreseeing potentially destabilizing situations, especially when the socioeconomic and cultural aspects that result from these actions are not taken into account. As stated by Gumucio, it is necessary to develop communicative competence, so that it is possible to achieve a participatory democracy, and that is achieved when the community and especially their leaders are trained to do so.

Table 1. Analysis of experiences of relocation in the context of the principles of communication for social change

Principles of communication for social change (41)	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Participatory Communication	The claims of the relocated population for unfulfilled promises and concerns arising from its new responsibilities suggest that there was not participatory communication.	The principles of unity, autonomy, land and culture are always present in the organizational dynamics of the Nasa people.	Participation has been raised only in government plans and policies. However, it has only been a lack of fulfillment of commitments and disappointment.
Identity	Was not taken into account in the project.	Comprehensive Risk Reduction is immersed in their own world view and the relationship between man and nature.	Manifest social tissue loss and thus loss of their identity as a community.
Cultural Diversity	Is not evident in the document	Respect and solidarity among those affected (indigenous, afros and agri-cultures). Pluralism and cultural expressions, helped make this process move forward in time and space.	Is not evident in the document
Communication competence	Is not evident in the document	The positioning of local and indigenous authorities within territorial, human, economic, cultural and social rights, make the strategic relocation plan respect cultural diversity and the life plans.	Community meetings in which community leaders, who are socioeconomically disadvantaged relative to those responsible for them, are selected.
Horizontal dialogue	Apparently it did not exist because of the disagreement manifested in the community.	Communities made mixture of thoughts and situations that allowed them to have a comprehensive and organic vision of the territory.	It is seen that what actually occurs is a vertical or, in many cases, lack of communication.

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Principles of communication for social change (41)	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Plurality	Was not taken into account, so that after the relocation difficulties among the inhabitants of the new development are presented.	Respect for indigenous constitutional law. Respect for their territory, customs and traditions of those affected. This was a rule from the beginning of the process	The economic forces of owners of mining companies don't allow the existing of democratic plurality. Their economic interest prevails.
Participative democracy	Is not evident	Implementation and participation of community assembly, the council, the captain (Counselor of authority), the El ' wala, the leaders and former councilmen.	Non-existent
Inclusion	Inclusion not taken into consideration. The community believes that, although they now have a roof, their biggest concern with their scarce resources is to maintain it.	organizational forms allowed an auto recognition of the authority, adapted to new situations present in the territory, building real autonomies from each of the communities and promoting self-determination as town	Non-existent
Protection of the environment	Apparently it was not taken into account by the institutions, as there were complaints about not adapting spaces for the creation of home gardens.	The indigenous community as a social actor became less vulnerable by awareness and knowledge that allowed them to identify threats, exhibitions, vulnerabilities that endanger their lives and property.	The main concern of the communities is in the preservation of natural riverbeds and air conservation and the environment in general, which is affected by pollution as a result of the mineral extraction process

Community participation and Urban Development- A view from public policies in Colombia

Community participation in Colombia is viewed as a constitutional right. However, community participation in Barranquilla is infrequent (46-47). This makes processes for sustainable urban development very difficult.

In Colombia, land use planning is based on the following principles: a) the social and ecological function of property; b) the prevalence of the general interest over the particular; c) the equitable distribution of burden and benefits.

The POT includes three basic components: a) General Component: includes the policies, objectives and territorial strategies for short,

medium and long term plans. b) Urban Component: refers to urban land management and expansion. c) Rural Component: integrates the objectives and strategies of the District policies based on programs, actions, procedures and management tools to guide the appropriate use of rural land (48).

For the case of Barranquilla, the POT team established eight axes. The axes that are associated with the city's urban planning and transformation call for a Equitable and inclusive city, which aims to promote social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions that improve the quality of life of Barranquilla's inhabitants (1).

Given the existing reality of not yet having information about the people's opinion and

participation in the urban development project called "La Loma", this communication plan is drawn from existing criteria and spaces for community participation within the POT.

In terms of community participation, the plan promotes the social, economic, political and environmental conditions that will guarantee the quality of life of people living and working in the area. The project also explicitly demonstrates two points where the community could be engaged: Article 120 - Cleaning Services. The project will consider the creation of companies or cooperatives formed with the participation of recyclers and promoting educational campaigns for the formation of a culture of no waste as well as no byproducts from cleaners that links communities in solving environmental problems later. Additionally, in article 125, it is thought of as a strategy to generate "commitment to the mutual collaboration to improve safety conditions in the area" (49).

In 2010, city council debated around the "La Loma" project proposed plan. Councilman Zapata was concerned about how the Events Center that was expected to recover access to the river for citizens was usurped by entrepreneurs and private ports. The main conclusion of this meeting "was that a greater citizen participation and openness to public in decision around urban development projects in Barranquilla is needed". It was also suggested that the Chambers of Commerce "take into account the comments of the media, the community, councilors and assembly members and move forward with the projects." The city council was also concerned with the fact that the city expressed unrealistic expectations to the community. However, despite the significant delays the project is expected to be done. In addition, it was stated that community members are

willing to accept economic compensation for their property to facilitate the development of the area (49).

The participation of the community of La Loma was limited to the ability to respond to the letters sent to the community by registered mail and the notice published in a newspaper. The number of people who made their objections or observations after being contacted for one of the two tracks is not known (1).

The Mayor's office website published a series of documents evidencing the following: mass dissemination through days of socialization of the POT team, which focuses on mass media, associations and institutions. Communication to groups of citizens was informative and conducted after the POT had already been defined.

According to the type of participation in developmental initiatives made by Paolo Me-falopulos, in regards to the La Loma project from the decrees of 2005 and 2013 suggest a passive participation by the community while the records of the debate in the Council of Barranquilla evidence a form of participation for consultation by interested parties (50).

Proposed communication plan for the Isla of La Loma Family relocation Process

Taking into account community participation stipulated by the current Colombian and Barranquilla regulations guidelines, as well as lessons learned from other similar experiences, we propose a communication plan based on the theory of communication for social change (41). This plan also offers a dialogue facilitator guide based on the methodology of CPBox (Comments and Patterns Boxes).

The CPBox is a methodology to enhance citizen participation, a box torn from a question that challenges a matter of concern to a community. This question can take various forms. These forms we call dimensions. Thus, in the same box there can be several dimensions. To develop a case, age, gender or interests can form a group. This group works to provide the information needed to fill the box. The group decides by consensus what contributions are those that should eventually contain the box. The group draws conclusions on its own contributions. If multiple dimensions

are developed, then various groups present their cases to each other (50).

The proposal is a contextual guide. It looks to be flexible with the circumstances of the community and employ the dynamic of empowered participation.

According to the guidelines set forth above, the following guide is therefore proposed for the island of La Loma or in other similar families' relocation cases.

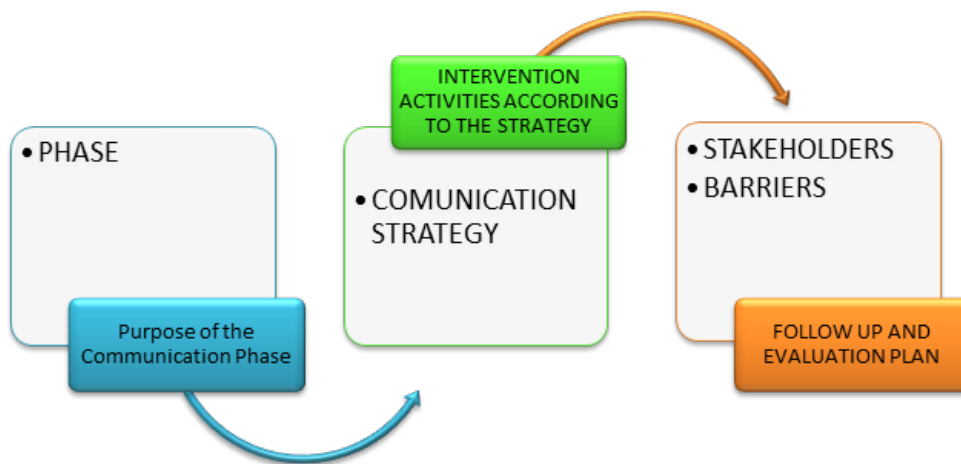


Figure 1. Central Axis Communication Plan by Phases

Table 2. Guidelines for the formulation of a strategic communication plan with a community communication participatory approach

PHASE	OBJECTIVES	VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	ACTIVITIES
Assessment	Establish a diagnosis of sociodemographic, sociocultural and socioeconomic conditions in the community for the correct formulation of strategies and activities in the different stages of awareness, management and sustainability.	Census at least 6 months before starting the process. Include information on social, economic, cultural and demographic factors that directly affect the community.	Conduct a census house by house that also includes a field journal to collect and observe additional problematic factors as well as components of future employability and productivity.
	Know the POT and potential stakeholders	Organization of a document setting out a timeline in the different proposals, objectives, scope and impact on the evolution of this proposed urban development.	. Systematization and socialization of urban development plan through workshops with stakeholders.
	Diagnose the communication process with the community, identifying weaknesses, opportunities, strengths and threats relevant to account by the Territorial.	SWOT Analysis of actions to be taken by each item in terms of agenda to carry out.	Colcha Quilt: It brings the community together in small groups; members raise their own narratives about the context, highlighting weaknesses, opportunities, strengths and threats.
	Follow - up and evaluation.	Report of activities that include physical media: photos and audiovisual.	Survey Satisfaction led by person responsible for activities.

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PHASE	OBJECTIVES	VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	ACTIVITIES
Training and Sensitization	Conformation of an interdisciplinary team of architects, lawyers, social worker, psychologist, social communicator and anthropologist.	Act of establishment of interdisciplinary group Work plan by areas of intervention. Work schedule and budget.	Regular meetings in the community. Enact constitution of interdisciplinary group
	Train and motivate interdisciplinary team, as responsible for leading the process in situ awareness, so as to facilitate the approach to the community and contribute to the local authority to develop a sensible and institutional pedagogy both inside and in the area to impact. Organizational change to facilitate the development of the Strategy and contribute to the entities involved in the project, deepen the focus of the rights of citizens.	Train 100% team leader in educational awareness strategies and processes. Workshop for Agency, office or department staff Photographic record Registration document participation to collect the different voices and conclusions of the event	Awareness Workshop: "Freaky before change of place." It cleaves the group for trouble spots; 1) Health, 2) Education, 3) Culture, 4) Sources of work and 5) Food security. Members of each group must identify and visualize the problem through the eyes of the community towards the process of relocation. Finally, contrast those visualizations with the real visions of the community, to generate identification processes and awareness and motivation in the team. Training Workshop on teaching strategies: On ways to address the community, taking into account the needs of the community, and prior experience in processes.
	Promote through the model of participatory communication, leadership and community empowerment.	Act of establishment of interdisciplinary group. Conclusions of working team and list of actions to be undertaken by the community.	Generating a worktable formed by "community leaders" and others formed by community participation process institutional managers.
Follow - up and Evaluation		Report of activities including physical reports: photos and audiovisual.	Satisfaction survey conducted by the person in charge of the workshop or responsible for the activity.

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PHASE	OBJECTIVES	VERIFIABLE INDICATORS	ACTIVITIES
Management	<p>Interdisciplinary team Workshop development of local community participation ownership of the Methodological Model CPBox aimed at the work-table to develop efficiently the stages included in the project. Community Disseminate and promote community and from participation in the communication process strategies designed in the framework of the intervention and the relocation process.</p>	<p>100% of communication components and communication strategies designed based on the findings from the previous stages. 70% of the affected community participating in the activity of CPBoxes.</p>	<p>CPBoxes Workshop: a question or an issue that concerns the community arises, this question is made from different angles and perspectives (institutions, community). For each case a group is formed, taking into account age, gender, interests. Each group provides information to fill the box. In each group the questions that reflect the problems of each and conclusions are made are chosen. Each group presents its case to their peers. Development of communication pieces and communication strategies. Google Translate for Business:Translator ToolkitWebsite TranslatorGlobal Market Finder</p>
	Follow up and Evaluation	Report of activities including physical reports: photos and audiovisual.	Satisfaction survey conducted by the workshop owner or responsible for the activity.
Sustainability	Periodic progress monitoring related to the methodological model to local authorities in the region	<p>Members of the participating community satisfied with the communications plan and planned activities. - Members of the multidisciplinary team satisfied with the fulfillment of the objectives and interaction with the community. The 100% of community members maintain the relocation site and generate their own strategies for sustainability and empowerment from participatory process and training within the intervention. The 100% of the community does not reproduce the problem now solved in other areas or places.</p>	<p>Survey of satisfaction of the community. Workshop Documentation of the experience, to reflect the process of citizen participation and involvement of the relocated community.</p>

CONCLUSION

Community participation focused on horizontal, permanent and inclusive dialogue can make the difference between successful relocation processes and those that are not. Projects

involving the population at every stage of the process exhibit more positive results because not only are the needs of the community heard, but the community also ensures that these needs are taken into account during implementation. It also prevents potentially

destabilizing situations, especially when not taking into account the socioeconomic and cultural aspects that are derived from these actions. As Gumucio states, it is necessary to develop communicative competence in an environment that allows for participatory democracy and that is achieved when the community and especially their leaders are competent to do so.

Considering communication as a cornerstone for social change processes, as well as instances where community participation is necessary, ensures that interventions in relocation processes meet the criteria of inclusion. Similarly, it assesses the needs of each and every one of the inhabitants of the areas intervened. In this sense, the only goal would not just be to implement actions of executing urban development, but over all to give significance to the commitment of urban projects where everyone can benefit under equal conditions.

Community participation as a communication strategy is important for the future of the families in La Loma in Barranquilla to create opportunities to work together in the construction of urban spaces where new infrastructure projects are drawn. The condition of citizens can be improved by interpersonal communication in groups, in their quest to achieve common goals such as the defense of their rights in settlements where they have lived in recent years. To serve their citizens, communities can exercise active participation in decision-making leading to the construction of public policies, including those related to urban public space.

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