Emile G. McAnany. **Saving the World: A Brief History of Communication for Development and Social Change**, University of Illinois Press, 2012, 208 pp. $47.95 (hardcover), $25.00 (paperback).

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Communications for development is a trendy, fast-changing focus of policy and theoretical attention. Rather than rushing to keep up with new initiatives, this short volume by Emile G. McAnany seeks to document the historical role of communications for social change and development, assess the current state of ICT and interpersonal relations for development and social change, and lay down markers for determining the success of failure of these efforts. The misleadingly titled **Saving the World** is the most recent offering in the long-running "History of Communication" series edited by Robert McChesney and John Nerone. McAnany is at his best when he looks backward to the intellectual forefathers of communication for development (c4d, which is now more commonly referred to as information and communication technologies for development—ICT4D, or simply ICTD).
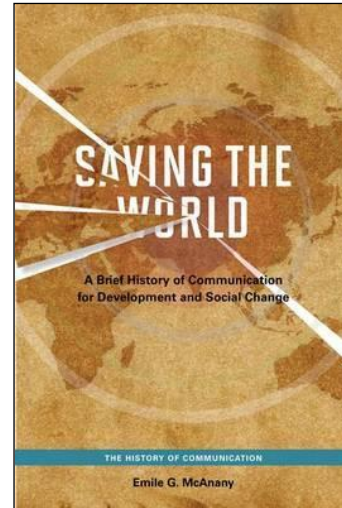
This work is firmly and explicitly rooted on three classic cross-disciplinary texts that shaped McAnany's intellectual development as a young scholar half a century ago. The first of these is Daniel Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (1958), which laid the basis for "modernization studies" as they relate to communications. The second contribution was Everett Rogers' 1962 study, *Diffusion of Innovations,* which refocused and extended policy and theoretical attention from modernization to the diffusion of new ideas. Third, on the heels of Rogers' study, came Wilbur Schramm's *Mass Media and National Development: The Role of Information in Developing Countries* (1964), which brought considerable attention to UNESCO and the role culture and communications played in development.

Contemporary scholars of ICT4D probably have heard of these three pillars of their field, but today, other works have, for the most part supplanted them. The most valuable contribution of McAnany is to remind us of these early landmarks of the field and provide greater perspective on the enterprise. But, throughout the book, McAnany returns to these three scholars again and again, trying to recast their work to retain their significance for later decades. This particular stretch is less convincing. He also reviews subsequent contributions by a wide range of authors and activists including Andre Gunder Frank, Armand Mattelart, Paulo Freire, Luis Beltran, Bill Drayton, and Mohammad Yunnis.

After reprising the work of his three intellectual inspirations, McAnany turns to the role of UNESCO in bringing attention to mass communications and as an instigator of new thinking on development. Although McAnany (like Rogers before him) recognizes that the paradigm for change

embodied in UNESCO was, for the most part, abandoned as a failure by the mid-1970s, it played a powerful role in energizing developing country interest in the topic. These early efforts also brought to the forefront the need by researchers and development institutions to develop measures for determining the success or failure of development initiatives. Throughout Sav*ing the World* McAnany returns over and over to the ebbing of one dominant paradigm after another, and the rise of new ones to replace those that fall out of favor.

The author then revisits other communication for development paradigms that burst onto the scene and then faded. "Dependency theory" arose from Latin America and then spread to other developing countries. The case of Tanzania receives special attention for communicating a new health campaign to its people. And, China started to attract the attention of Lerner, Rogers, Schramm, and others for their communication and development activities. But, by the late 1970s, the "tide of c4d seemed to be ebbing, as developing countries fell into debt, and the general direction for these countries seemed to be increasingly defined by market liberalization" (p. 86)

As communications slipped down the development policy agenda, industry level participation and empowerment at the local level gained attention. What was far from clear, as McAnany acknowledges is "how to define participation in c4d" (p. 91) or even whether "participatory communication in development deserves the title of paradigm, much less that of a dominant one" (p. 95). Exactly how participatory communication was supposed to promote development was never clarified.

Social entrepreneurship since the 1990s is the final paradigm of social change and development raised by the author. Here, McAnany diverges further from what is now ICT4D. His two exemplars are Bill Drayton, founder of Ashoka, which recruits and supports young grassroots leaders around the world involved with local development along with Mohammad Yunnis, the Nobel Prize-winning founder of the Grameen Bank and popularizer of micro-lending. The problem with this chapter is that very few of the multitudes of Ashoka Fellows are involved in communications and that Grameen Phone (a spinoff of Grameen Bank) was quickly marginalized by the explosive spread of mobile/wireless communications in the developing world. Ashoka and Grameen Bank are important and worthy examples of social entrepreneurship, but they are only marginally connected to ICT4D.

In the two concluding chapters McAnany begins by acknowledging that three of the leading development economics gurus today – Jeffrey Sachs, William Easterly, and Paul Collier—make almost no mention of communications in their discussion of current projects (p. 127). He then lists five important questions for the future, but few answers:

- "Funding sources and controls: who will be in charge?" (pp. 129–132),
- "Who defines success and how is it measured?" (pp. 132–135),
- "What role does innovation play in C4D projects" (pp. 135–137),
- "How do people and technology relate to each other?" (pp. 137–139), and
- "Can good ideas solve problems in different contexts?"

The way forward, *Saving the World* concludes, will depend on knowledge emerging from universities, more research on the parameters of success, new technology that aids development, the mobilization of people through need and incentives, and the adaption of social entrepreneurship to a communication for development paradigm. There is nothing wrong with such goals, of course, but they are not specific enough to guide policymakers who need to promote change and implement new policies.

In short, *Saving the World* provides a strong history for understanding the context of efforts to use communication to spur development. McAnany's continuing push for measures that will demonstrate success or failure is welcome.   This volume will be most valuable to those seeking historical context as they delve into the role of information and communication technologies for development.

Unfortunately, this slim volume mainly illustrates a chronology of failed efforts. McAnany clings too tightly to the important but dated work of Lerner, Rogers, and Schramm, and tries to fit new wine into old bottles. He is unable to effectively show how participatory communication and social entrepreneurship will be game changers for ICT4D, and does not grapple sufficiently with the importance of the Internet for development, with the proliferation of mobile/wireless devices worldwide, or with the consequences of greater global connectivity and social networking. His volume would have been more attuned to contemporary developments had he delved deeply into the current work of the World Bank's InfoDev program (infodev.org) that promotes innovative projects on the use of information and communication technologies for economic development in order to "innovate, connect, and transform." He also might have consulted *Information Technologies & International Development* (itidjournal.org) an interdisciplinary open-access journal that focuses on the intersection of information and communication technologies and is this journal's sister online publication.