

## Internal Communication Challenges in International Development Organizations

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This paper examines why communication is indispensable in organisations and the glitches associated with internal communication behaviour of international aid agencies. It reviews some of the consequences of poor communication practices within large bureaucracies such as multilateral agencies and presents broad recommendations to change their internal communications culture in alignment with fundamental organisational priorities and governance structures. The paper draws on conceptual and practical insights in applied communication and development administration to explore the communication dynamics in these agencies and offer suggestions to optimise employee communication in a digital world. From the analysis, it is evident that to achieve the laudable vision of international development, a repositioning of internal communication as an integral component of their corporate communication programme, is inevitable for development agencies. They also need to progressively leverage the power of communication technology in a decentralised, multicultural and professionally diverse work environment for greater cohesion and connectivity.

**Key words:** internal communication, information overload, cross cultural communication, development organisations, organisational climate, change management

### Introduction

International development organizations have become a major part of global and multinational institutions in existence today. Examples include multilateral agencies within the United Nations family of organisation, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organisation (WHO), and International Labour Organisation (ILO). There are also transnational non-governmental organisations like the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent (IFRC) with mandates to “change the world” and make a difference for humanity. Many of these agencies are large bureaucracies with multi-level structures and offices in various parts of the world. Their workers are drawn from diverse professional disciplines, cultural backgrounds, managerial orientations and work ethos. Thus, the peculiar nature of these

organisations raises some internal communication issues and challenges, which are the focus of this paper.

Development agencies adopt a variety of internal communication methods and tactics to achieve their mandate and vision. These include printed and electronic communication; formal and informal networks; and digital and traditional forms of communication. They also adopt diverse workplace engagement processes such as intragroup, interpersonal, intergroup and broader organisational communication modalities.

However, questions have been raised on the effectiveness of these approaches in enhancing their internal coherence and corporate positioning. For example, Ngwainmbi (2014) observes that to achieve organisational enhancement and effective coordination in a global context, development agencies need to address their internal communication practices. In a similar vein, an ongoing qualitative study by this author (on which this paper is based) points to the need for international aid agencies to reinvent their workplace communication approaches for more organisational effectiveness. This is because most of their approaches are still focussed on traditional organisational communication practices such as using communication as the mouthpiece of management and publications of 'house organs', rather than strategic deployment of internal communication to achieve organisational results, enhance staff citizenship, foster organisational change and broker innovation.

## Significance of Internal Communication

The term internal communication is sometimes used interchangeably with internal relations, workplace communication or employee or organisational communication. Basically, Smith and Mounter (2008) conceptualise internal communication as the function responsible for effective communication among participants within an organisation, aimed at ensuring information flow around the organisation, motivating people and propagating shared values. Primarily, internal communication embodies information and communication processes and practices that promote interdependencies and interconnection among various units, participants and elements of an organisation for its effective functioning.

The power of effective communication is well established in the literature. (Burnes, 2004) states that communication is pivotal to organisational coordination and connectivity while Drucker (2004) argues that it provides the link for various organisational roles, responsibilities, and performance and is critical to building organisational systems. Stoner, Freeman & Gilbert (2009) support this proposition, reiterating the established notion that communication is the thread that connects all

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strands of any organisation. Communication is also indispensable for staff motivation and engagement. According to Berger (2011) meaningful communication are the drivers of staff motivation and engagement.

Lessons from good practices on the contribution of internal communication have also been established. From Yates' (2006) study on how internal communication affects organisational effectiveness and its bottom-line, four main practices of organisations that achieve internal communication effectiveness are identified as follows:

- Adequate use of communication to increase employee commitment by focussing on the relationship between employees and their leaders;
- Communication culture and approaches are designed to drive behaviour change in line with organisational vision;
- Managers and supervisors are mobilised to draw a clear line of sight between employees and business outcomes; and
- Use of hierarchy of communication effectiveness to modulate organisational operations and ultimately contribute to the bottom-line.

Earlier, Peters and Waterman (1982) analysed the internal communication practices of organisations that promote the culture of excellence in management. They found, among others, a “no-holds barred” approach to communication characterised by the following traits:

- Staff members are free to talk about issues and creatively solve problems. Adequate space is provided for various staff – dreamers, heretics, gadflies, mavericks or geniuses - to spur and invigorate the organisation.
- There are many opportunities for internal engagement such as meetings, forums and conferences. However, meetings are also informal but focussed.
- All necessary support to ensure effective dialogue and conversations around issues are provided and received.
- The environment fosters genuine team spirit, experimentation and innovativeness.
- Based on the freedom that exists in such organisations, engagement of staff is intense, and questioning of all proposals can be carried out unabashed.
- Staffs members are treated with respect and become partners of the organisation and are allowed to function in a free environment. This creates closeness and family feeling.

- Staff members operate a value-driven' approach and inspired from top to bottom. Management team sets tone by leading from the front, speaking with one voice and engaged through formal and informal meetings.
- There is a passionate preaching and practice of organisational values across all levels of the organisation which generates excitement.

However many international development organisations are unable to maximise the power of internal communication due to a number of difficulties. Against this backdrop, we examine the internal communications dynamics of international development organisations and some of its pitfalls.

## **Forms of internal communication challenges**

### **i. Information overload**

The contemporary workplace is largely knowledge-based and one of its challenges is information overload. In "Death by Information Overload" Hemp (2006) argues that most workers in the digital age are struggling under the weight of information inundation and the tidal wave of messages. Other studies also affirm the devastating effect of information overload on the work force (Dean and Webb, 2011; Senge, 2006). Our ongoing research affirms that information overload is one of the perennial challenges of international development organisations. For example, some key informants suggest they have close to 2000 work related emails in their inbox that they have not attended to at the end of the year. Others speak of "too much to read with too little time", "we are flooded with information", "it is hectic", "we are distracted by having to respond to too many requests", "we are overloaded", "it is simply dizzying" (Fayoyin 2015, p. 10)

The causes of information overload in development organisations are multifarious. Some relate to the nature of the industry which is constantly evolving, while others emanate from lack of discipline in the use of digital media by staff. There are instances when messages for specific staff members are replied to all, adding to the torrent of emails that daily flood staff inbox. As one informant says, "we are cursed with the send button".

### **ii. Message miscommunication**

Message understanding is a fundamental element of the communication process, and effective communication is said to have taken place when a message is understood in the form that the source intended. Yet, many factors affect message comprehension in development organisations.

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From my participant's observation spanning over 20 years of work in many African countries, a number of instances of message misunderstanding have been experienced. Below is an illustrative case.

At a senior staff meeting of one of the agencies, a decision was taken to hire a consultant for a particular job. The minutes of the meeting effectively document the decision. Months down the line, however two colleagues who weren't part of the initial meeting decided there was no need for a consultant. They also queried the rationale of the prior decision and went ahead with the assignment without a consultant. Other colleagues rebelled and raised a storm over the approach of their team mates. An email "war" ensued, and before a truce was effected, at least 20 emails had been "shot" across three locations in the organisation. Many colleagues were left wondering while the simple task of hiring a consultant could be so contentious and rancorous (Fayoyin 2015, p.12).

Miscommunication over messages has been accentuated by overreliance on email as a main tool of communication in these organisations. But there are also specific snags from various components of the communication process: source, message, channel, receiver or the communication context. In bureaucracies such as multilateral development agencies, interference, distortion and 'noise' at any point in the process affect message fidelity and communication effectiveness. Also, in a high pressure work environment, there is a tendency to consider merely sending information as communication; however, the cost of this assumption is oftentimes miscommunication. A key informant, using the folk etymology of the Tower of Babel as the context, describes the misunderstanding over messaging as "babel syndrome," – a confounding of language (Fayoyin, 2015, p. 13)

### iii. Multicultural and personality differences

As a result of the multiracial and multinational staffing nature of the industry, multicultural differences are major problems prevalent in international organisations and global institutions. Brett, Behfar and Kern (2006) identify four discernible patterns of multicultural challenges faced by international organisations as: direct versus indirect communication; trouble with accents and fluency; differing attitude toward hierarchy and authority; and conflicting norms for decision making. Without a doubt, most international development organisations are multicultural.

For example, the Malawi UNICEF country office in 2010 had staff from 15 countries spanning all the continents of the world. While staff multicultural diversity has the advantage of a truly international development organisation, the challenge of managing different nuances, perceptions, and personalities is equally real. The case below helps to illustrate the challenge.

A multicultural team of seven employees was put together to develop a campaign for behaviour change by an international NGO. The Africans in the group felt they had local cultural context and knowledge and should therefore lead the team. The Europeans thought they had the sophisticated epidemiological insight and should therefore lead. Unhealthy personality, professional and cultural differences affected the take-off of the project and management had to constitute a new team (Fayoyin 2015, p. 13).

Field evidence from various organisations demonstrates that cultural and personality difference is a major barrier which confronts international agencies. The differences manifest in difficult interpersonal relationships, and sometimes in dysfunctional teams. However, multiculturalism is a potential to nurture and to adequately harness.

#### iv. Culture of silence

The metaphorical expression: the “elephant in the room” explains the problem associated with how organisational environment affects communication, especially the ability to freely express ideas in a given situation. Such a situation is characterised by an attitude of ‘silence’ or ‘hush hush’ or ‘no go areas’ for some issues or subjects. Findings from empirical studies on voice literature in organisational theory suggest that employee voice serves as an adaptive tool in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing work environment (Ashford, Sutcliffe, and Christianson, 2009). However, key informants from our ongoing qualitative study point to the pervasiveness of the culture of silence in many development agencies. While this varies from office to office, it is generally established that employees have issues that they want to talk about, ranging from bad behaviour in the organisation to questionable appointments, but in many offices are too scared or uncomfortable to talk about them. The following scenario helps to exemplify the situation:

In one multilateral agency in Kenya, most staff recognise that a major problem is the office is the attitude of the operations manager. But because of his relationship with influential decision makers in the organisation and the potential for punitive measures on staff in the department during performance review, everyone kept silent. Reports could not raise issues on the staff’s pathological behaviour; neither could management take a decisive decision to correct the situation. The office endured the bad behaviour of this staff for nearly 10 years (Fayoyin 2015, p. 14).

Ideally, a favourable environment that encourages free expressions would help to put all issues on the table and not sweep things under the carpet; but that was not the case in this organisation. Perlow and Williams (2011) argues that the ‘reign of silence’ starts when staff members choose not to confront issues and allow the problem to simmer for a long time, which becomes harmful to such organisations.

**v. Effect of organisational structure**

Several studies affirm that organisational structure affects internal communication and vice versa. However, we are concerned with how structure constrains communication dynamics. Most of the international development organisations operate across hemispheres, which creates a major challenge of internal coordination. For example, UNICEF has 191 country offices, 6 regional offices, three liaison offices and a host of national committees that carry out different functions to promote its mandate. And when this is linked to the management of outposts in regional economic institutions (for example), the internal communication challenges of development organisations become even greater. Other agencies, like **Action Aid**, have a federal governance structure with different committees, regions, countries and local offices, which result in specific challenges for communication. Furthermore, based on the nature of development programming, most development organisations adopt a project management approach which sometimes leads to silo-mentality and turfs wars. Below is an illustrative case:

An official from the headquarters of one of the international NGOs sends an email to five country offices in a region on a new campaign to be launched. The regional offices and liaison office are not kept in the loop. The regional director asks the technical specialists to track the situation and provide necessary technical oversight. But the HQ adviser writes back: “we don’t need the support of the regional office. This is an HQ initiative”. That results in a flurry of emails on why HQ should parachute interventions to country offices without due consultation with other offices (Fayoyin 2015, p. 15).

In a digital age, with a variety of communication channels which break geographic boundaries, functioning from various locations should not be a constraint. However, in many development organisations, structure seems to significantly hamper message effectiveness and information flow.

**vi. Inadequate recognition of communication’s function**

Experts in corporate communication have argued that strategic communication should be a management function (Grunig, 2006; Lesly 2003). However, achieving this goal has been a major challenge for many organisations. Field experience in development agencies demonstrates that strategic communication is not accorded a management function in its truest sense. First, due to the need for visibility and resource mobilisation, more prominence is given to external communication. Yet, employee communication, which is pivotal to organisational effectiveness, is rarely prioritised. In addition, many agencies do not have internal communication function as a recognised role in country or regional offices. Besides, the internal communication practices are more for internal publicity and information dissemination, instead of facilitating a robust organisational conversation around issues and employee engagement.

### Consequences of internal miscommunication

Findings from various studies point to an astounding impact of ineffective internal communication on organisations. According to Myatt (2012) a large number of organisational problems occur as a result of poor communication. More specifically, Brett, Behfar and Kern (2006) found that cross cultural communication barriers affect team work by reducing information sharing, creating interpersonal conflict, or both. This is consistent with earlier findings by Stoner, Freeman & Gilbert (2009) on the negative consequences of cultural misconception and stereotyping. On information overload, Hemp (2009) established a number of economic and social costs, such as loss of productive time, reduced creative days, and delay in decision making.

Ineffective internal communication also affects organisational change. Kotter (1996, p.85) concluded that failure of communication during change management leads to “a stalled transformation”. On the impact of poor organisational climate, Ashford, Sutcliffe and Christianson(2009) rationalise that the inability of staff to voice their ideas on pertinent organisational issues affects organisational adjustment and future prospects. This consequence is affirmed by Perlow and Williams (2011) who posit that staff silence has both individual and organisational costs. At the individual level, silence swells negative emotions like anger, anxiety and resentment, while at the institutional level; it robs the entire organisation of creative ideas and insight that can advance the bottom-line. Finally, on inadequate communication from managers Hamm (2011, p. 183) encapsulates the impact as follows:

“If you want to know why so many organisations sink into chaos, look no further than their leaders’ mouths. Leadership at any level isn’t easy – but unclear, vague, roller coaster pronouncements make many top managers’ jobs indefinitely more difficult than they need to be. Leaders frequently espouse dozens of cliché-infused declarations...Too often they assume that everyone shares the same definition of broad terms like vision, loyalty, accountability, customer relationship, teamwork, focus, priority, culture, frugality, decision making, results and so on, and virtually ad infinitum”

The consequences of ineffective internal communication in development agencies also mirror what is described above. Nevertheless, the following specific consequences have been identified.

#### **i. Lack of intra and inter-organisational coordination**

Many of the agencies are fraught with weak interdependencies of operating units; suffer the impact of ‘confounded language’ in relation to approaches to achieve results, and waste valuable resources due to poor coordination. For many multilateral agencies, this manifests as a portfolio of disconnected projects and functions, largely retrofitted. Weak coordination is also experienced

among development agencies, which partly necessitated the move toward “The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness” and the commencement of the “One UN Development Assistance Framework”.

**ii. Resistance to change management.**

Our research shows that some development agencies suffer from resistance to change and the phenomenon of ‘stalled transformation’ mentioned earlier. This results in cycles of change, which have not achieved desired vision and objectives. Although the ubiquity and constancy of change is not in doubt, it is argued that poor communication in these organisations has inflicted significant damage on their ability to realise change.

**iii. Ineffective knowledge management**

One of the nagging problems of these agencies is how to promote their achievements. While the bulk of the information needed for knowledge leadership is locked up in studies, trip reports, commissioned reports, and poorly used databases, such information is not effectively mined to generate the knowledge to enhance thought leadership and organisational learning. Thus, valuable time is lost in re-inventing the wheel to prepare briefing notes, speeches, talking points, and power point presentations, again and again.

**iv. Debilitating organisational climate**

The absence of effective workplace communication has created a debilitating work environment, characterised by mistrust, misperception and a culture of silence. It has also led to the flourishing of alternative sources of information with heightened disaffection and staff disengagement.

**v. Tyranny of information gatekeepers**

Many key informants report that weak internal communication in specific international non-governmental organisations has resulted in the emergence of ‘gatekeepers’ who control information on specific issues to their advantage. They also link this to ‘organisational politicians’ who, inadvertently or deliberately, manipulate information and organisational knowledge for personal gains. A concomitant result of this development is promoting ‘exclusivity’ and turf protection.

In sum, the absence of an adequate internal communication culture and subsequent robust information flow has not allowed the various elements of the organisations to be aligned to achieve strategic goals. It has also not facilitated effective deployment of talent for the full realisation of transformative initiatives within the industry.

## Recommendations for improved internal communication

To redress the negative internal communication culture of these organisations, six cross cutting recommendations are proposed. Overall, development agencies need to invest in appropriate institutional capacity to transform their internal communication function and practices.

### 1. Reposition communication's function

The first step toward improving the value of internal communication in development organisations is to reposition communication function. The strategic positioning of communication will help them put in place specific policies and protocols that will enhance internal communication. In this repositioning agenda, internal communication will shift from the generic workplace communication of merely sharing benefits and entitlements and keeping the organisation just going to staff engagement, workforce empowerment and evolving an organisational culture to achieve results. The new approach to internal communication will also focus on staff mobilisation and serve as a tool of organisational change, social engagement and industry transformation. In addition, it will help to modulate the multiple conversations taking place in the organisations and harmonise these with the future of the industry. But this can only happen when development agencies embrace the principle of strategic communication as a management function and integrate this into the core competence of their staff.

To implement this shift, specific skills are needed from the focal point of internal communication. These include knowledge management, internal branding, cultural and behaviour change, employee engagement, strategic communication and coaching skills in communication. Effectively functioning in this new capacity will therefore require a retooling of the traditional communication professionals or focal points. But this function should not be completely abandoned to the information specialist (Drucker, 2006).

### 2. Develop and implement an innovative internal communication strategy

Improving effective internal communication requires the development and full implementation of an integrated strategy which should be linked to external communication and overall corporate communication. This should incorporate a vision of employee engagement, a mapping of the internal publics to be reached, and a clear articulation of expected outcomes. First, a strategic analysis of the communications' environment of each agency to unearth the communication issues to be addressed needs to be undertaken. This will serve as the basis of developing the expected vision for internal communication and the key performance indicators to measure against.

Second, the communication programme should identify relevant communication channels for each audience group and appropriate publics for each outcome. Channel selection should ensure that “boring” old- school tools such as internal newsletter or suggestion boxes are replaced with more impactful methods, identified from research. Thus, a delineation of the tools for appropriate issues mapping and audience groups will be critical for effective internal communication. Leveraging the power of technology in the process of communication would also be critical. Examples of online tools to be considered include blogs, podcasts, desktop alerts, social media, games and webcasts, while possible workspace channels may include town-hall events, briefings sessions, round tables, one-on-ones, thematic forums and conferences. Development agencies need to take advantage of the current digital revolution in modernizing their organisational communications programmes. The entire internal communication behaviour must shift from the static and linear nature of information pushing to a dynamic, interactive and multiple user-generated content arrangements. Overall, the new communication behaviour needs to focus on achieving change management, knowledge management, employee engagement, and effective managerial communication.

Third, at the design and implementation stages, staff involvement will provide an ultimate advantage for the organisations. The strategy should thus include an implementation plan which outlines staff roles in effective communication and specific policies to guide various elements of the plan. Ownership of the initiative should not be left for communication officers alone. Neither should it be given to human resources associates who occupy very low positions in the organisations at the field level. To achieve the desired results, the internal communication programme should be viewed as an organisation or an office-wide priority. However, each office needs to find the best approach for its management. The most important issue is that it should not be perceived as a tool for advancing sectional agenda or personal interests. Therefore, insights from internal communication consultants may be helpful in crafting the strategy.

The programme should integrate effective monitoring and evaluation of communication results. This should include qualitative and quantitative methods of evidence generation for a holistic understanding of the extant and emerging communication dynamics. Comparative metrics and indicators to measure results against established indicators and specific organisational challenges need to be applied.

### **3. Institutionalise boundaryless mind-set**

Field experience has shown that the decentralised and globalised nature of the workforce of development agencies can be challenging. Also, the nature of the development industry tends to

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encourage working in silos and a culture of turf protection. This is one of the organisational practices which affect internal communication. Therefore, development organisations need to institutionalise interdependencies and seamless functioning through effective communication. They need to develop a boundary spanning mind-set, where staff members connect to the bigger vision and not bogged down with individual turfs and silo-mentality. Examining the impact of this approach, Welch (2003, p. 187) says:

“A boundaryless company would knock down external walls, making suppliers and customers’ part of a single process. It would eliminate the less visible walls of race and gender. It would put team ahead of individual ego”

Evolving a boundary-less work ethos will facilitate team collaboration and working across organisational units which results in a ‘virtual effect’. It also has a great potential in promoting exchange of creative ideas for organisational learning. To achieve this, development agencies need to use communication to strengthen staff connectedness for the evolution of strong and cohesive teams. Each office or organisation needs to rediscover the power of informal systems and the role of ‘connectors’. Agencies may need to experiment with creative buddy systems and creative use of findings from personality assessments to promote cross-functional teams. However, they need to watch out for unintended consequences of this approach in contributing to information overload.

#### **4. Enhance multicultural orientation**

Most development organisations are multicultural and function in a decentralised context. It stands to reason for them to prioritise multicultural communication in their operations. The starting point is to recognise the existing differences and work toward effective management of communication in a multi-cultural world. They also need to actively promote policies targeting cross cultural engagement through a strong sense of cultural awareness and appreciation for diversity. This can be done at various stages, but primarily at the beginning of staff tenure and during staff relocation.

#### **5. Track and respond to organisational climate**

As earlier discussed, organisational climate is critical to internal dynamics of development organisations and the communication behaviour that takes place. Thus, a continuous tracking of the organisational climate of various offices and organisations (interpersonal, inter-group, intra-group, organisational and even external) and responding to issues that crop up would be important. While the determinants of office environment are diverse, and may include changes in management style, or attitude of specific staff members, their impact on communication cannot be denied. Development organisations need to track the prevalent climate through formal and informal staff

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research, intelligence and polls. But it is critical to establish a system to respond to the findings. Of paramount significance is the development of a climate of trust and transparency for internal communication to be effective and supportive of organisational goals.

#### **6. Proactive communication by leaders and managers**

It is well established in management literature that communication is a chief function of managers (Burnes 2004; Drucker, 2004; 2006, Mintzberg, Quinn and Voyer, 1995). Moreover, proactive and effective communication by leaders is the fulcrum of high performing organisations (Yates, 2006). But as articulated by various experts, leaders of organisations need to become more adept at communication. According to Drucker (2006, p, 51) “great leaders may be charismatic or dull, generous or tight-fisted, visionary or numbers oriented... but they take responsibility for communicating”. And for Ulrich, Zenger and Smallwood (1999, p. 49) managers who want to achieve results must “communicate, communicate, communicate”. Therefore, the leadership of development agencies need to come out of its technical cocoon and become more effective in communication.

These managers need to embody skills for effective internal communication, including listening and internal mobilisation. As argued by Myatt (2012), effective leaders are great listeners and are astute in their observations. These skills need to become part of the internal communications package of senior managers and cluster heads of aid agencies. Specific tactics for internal mobilisation may include leader to leaders’ session or employees to managers’ dialogues. Some agencies have approached more proactive communication with staff through face to face, global staff meeting, senior leaders’ retreats, and ‘trado-digital’ town hall meetings. However, such forums need to reflect genuine multi-level dialogue rather than as platforms for announcements alone.

Leaders should therefore promote effective voice of all levels of the workforce for organisational advantage (Ashford, Sutcliffe, and Christianson, 2009). As discovered in the 2013 global survey on workforce engagement, effective leadership communication combined with peer to peer communication are essential for employee engagement: “Regular communication from the company’s leaders and informal communication between employees will begin to breed a culture of engagement, leading participation rates of employee engagement metrics and other interventions to be more successful” (Gallup 2013, p.10).

Finally, they need to sharpen their skills in persuasion and transference to enhance their capacity to mobilise the support for various organisational issues because it has been established

that followers today are driven by powerful motivations (Conger, 2011; Macobby, 2004). Thus, a coherent strategy of persuasion, as suggested by experts (Caldini, 2011; Garvin and Roberto, 2005), should be part of leadership competencies in development organisations.

Managerial communication should not be used as an opportunity to control decision making or for personal aggrandisement by different employees, but for genuine multi-level dialogues undergirded by a transparent office culture and climate. This is because staff members are quick to spot inconsistency in the talk and the walk of their leaders. Hence communication proficiency should be integral to the competency set of leaders and managers in development agencies.

## Summary

This study examined the prevalent internal communication pitfalls in international development organisations. It also identified some of the critical consequences of internal miscommunication and offers suggestions to improve the internal communications systems. Specifically, aid agencies need to continuously track their office environment in order to design appropriate communication programmes for relevant issues. Moreover, in view of the multicultural nature of the organisations, substantial investment is needed towards more effective cross-cultural communication. Adequate attention should also be placed on enhancing interdependencies among the various elements of the business units for seamless functioning and strategic positioning of the organisations. Finally, significant cultural changes are required to evolve a robust internal communication behaviour which is capable of building and creating community spirit for international organisations. Effective internal communication must become a critical organisational imperative for engaging workers and empowering them to become active citizens of their organisations. Managers and leaders have a critical role to play as champions of the transformative internal communication and mobilisation agenda being proposed. However, the entire work force needs to embrace communication's culture that promotes employee citizenship and organisational effectiveness.

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