

## Editorial

# Global Communication in Public Health and Community Medicine: A Cross-cultural Perspective and Social Change

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Effective global health communication depends mainly on cross-cultural understanding, bridging cultural divides, fostering trust, and empowering communities to participate actively in healthcare setting. This step also requires awareness and respect for other cultures and learning to adapt to bridge the cultural divide to avoid misunderstanding. This article argues the importance of looking at global health, communication, and culture to achieve social change in community medicine and public health.

Media scholars and communication practitioners recognized two theories that have been widely used in global public health, which include entertainment education (EE) and diffusion of innovation (DOI). Everett Rogers introduced DOI in 1962 to understand how particular innovations emerged and what led to the adoption of new practices.<sup>2</sup> EE came later in the 1970s, focusing on communicating education through entertainment channels. Michael Sabido, who introduced EE in the 1970s, initially used storytelling for health-related messages aimed at behavioral and social change. Since then, EE and DOI have been adopted in global health practices by focusing on mass media strategy that focuses on storytelling for change. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, EE and DOI have been used in many countries to promote vaccination and public health awareness and increase support and trust among organizations and the public.<sup>1</sup>

EE and DOI also emphasized the importance of involving community members in all stages of program development and implementation, whether they are community members or celebrities, to introduce and implement new practices based on local values. One example can be seen in breastfeeding practices. In the US, for example, breastfeeding has been normalized and promoted with the help of non-profit organizations, and celebrities who appeared on the cover of magazines from, models, singers, and TV personalities, whether they appear on Reality TV shows or through personal messages on social media. Some of these artists come from different cultures and races. In addition, several organizations are also involved, such as the US Breastfeeding Committee (USBC), with 140 member organizations representing local, national, and community organizations working to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding.

The two theories mentioned above focus on interdisciplinary fields and emphasize the importance of communication networks. DOI especially described that rate of adoption potentially achieved social change; however, it is largely dependent on diffusion process and the multi-faceted communication and its relationship with local and possibly global culture. One example can be seen from this current edition of this journal that describes community medicine and public health from different perspectives, from breastfeeding to work-life balance with the understanding of mental health to increase productivity in the workplace. The various aspects of this issue described the need to see community medicine and public health from multiple elements and connect them with local and global culture.

Social change in public health is a complex and ongoing process. Challenges include language barriers, limited resources, whether in education or community settings, or different cultural values. What lies ahead is establishing strategies for communication networks through various communication channels to support improvement in global public health. In addition, higher education needs to acknowledge the interdisciplinary field by including health

communication training for health practitioners to prepare them with the knowledge and skills required to interact effectively with diverse populations. At the same time, communication practitioners need to understand the complexities of public health to convey the right messages and the right communication channel.

Social change might be a buzzword, but with the record number of general elections globally, with at least 64 countries holding their elections this year, including Indonesia, the United States, India, and others, social change in global public health is no longer a buzzword, but a crucial step.

## References

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