ABSTRACT

Access to reliable and affordable energy is an essential input to sustainable development. Most of the rural communities in Zambia lack access to modern energy. Renewable energy technologies offer a solution to this. Through the help of various stakeholders, various renewable energy technologies are being promoted in rural Zambia. However, dissemination of information about renewable energy technologies may be hindered by several challenges many of which could be overcome through effective communication strategies. However, communication is usually marginalised and sometimes underutilized. Few studies have been conducted on communication strategies through which renewable energy technologies can be introduced to rural communities in Zambia.

The study aimed at finding out effective communication strategies for dissemination and adoption of renewable energy technologies in rural communities in Zambia. To this end, the study examined communication activities in the Jatropha Biofuels Programme by the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) in Kasama and Mungwi districts of Northern Province of Zambia.

Data was collected using a questionnaire administered among jatropha growers and in-depth interviews conducted with SNV personnel, the local capacity builder and representatives of the district biofuel association. Besides, focus group discussions were held with two purposefully selected SMEs in Kasama and one in Mungwi. Quantitative data was analysed using the Special Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative data was analysed manually and presented thematically according to the research questions and objectives.

The study findings were that in general, the porgramme was a positive effort in uplifting the lives of rural people by engaging them in economic activities and at the same time creating a base for widening access to modern and clean energy. The study findings also show that generally communication was underutilised. Further, the results show that workshops and community gatherings were effective communication channels for knowledge transfer and awareness creation in the prgramme. Apart from that, the study revealed that of the mass media channels, radio was more popular as a source of knowledge than television and the print media.

The study recommends that a communication strategy should be developed in order to ensure that effective channels and messages regarding renewable energy technologies are used to reach the rural communities. Further, the study recommends interfacing of mass communication channels and local small scale communication activities.

DEDICATION

To my parents, brother and sisters, nieces and nephews and my son Thomas.

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Nonetheless, the researcher apportions no responsibility on any of the parties herein mentioned for whatever misrepresentations, misconceptions and/or omissions.

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BAZ	–	Biofuels Association of Zambia
CFU	–	Conservation Farming Unit
DOE	–	Department of Energy
ESCO	–	Energy Supplying Companies
ECA	–	Economic Commission for Africa
EEA	–	European Environment Agency
GNESD	–	Global Network on Energy for Sustainable Development
GRZ	–	Government of the Republic of Zambia
IEA	–	International Energy Agency
INGO	–	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LCB	–	Local Capacity Builder
MACO	–	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
MEWD	–	Ministry of Energy and Water Development
NEP	–	National Energy Policy
PRSP	–	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REA	–	Rural Electrification Authority
REF	–	Rural Electrification Fund
REMP	–	Rural Electrification Master Plan
RETS	–	Renewable Energy Technologies
SADC	–	Southern Africa Development Committee
SMEs	–	Small and Medium Enterprises
SNV	–	Netherlands development Agency
UNCTAD	–	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNEP – Untied Nations Environmental Programme