

**NPTEL**  
**NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE**

**Course Name**

**Strategic Communication for  
Sustainable Development**

by  
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**Lecture 13: Roles of Strategic Communication for  
Sustainable Development**

Welcome back to the course titled strategic communication for sustainable development, my name is Aradhna Malik and I am helping you with this course

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**Communication approaches in sustainable development** (GTZ, 2006)

<b>Conventional communication approach</b>	<b>Strategic communication approach</b>
Managers focus on media & messages, & come up with exciting ideas that capture the imagination	Managers analyze the wider system & plan desired outcomes strategically
Focus on convincing people individually while their social sphere is not analyzed	Interventions focus on goals, audiences & messages determine media
Communication is an end-of-pipe activity, isolated from the rest of a project	Communication is fully integrated in a project from the start
Content & message are secondary & cannot answer 'why' or 'what' questions	Target audiences are involved in planning, interventions are based on their values, i.e. their 'why' or 'what'

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And in this lecture we will discuss some approaches to sustainable development to communication approaches we will start with that and we will move on to other aspects of strategic communication. So to start with this report by the federal ministry for economic

cooperation and development government of Germany has written this report or has come up with this report titled strategic communication for sustainable development they wrote this report in the year 2006 and this is the one I am referring to, now because it is still quite relevant okay.

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**Communication approaches in sustainable development** (GTZ, 2006)

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And according to this report some of the approaches that they discuss the conventional communication approach and the strategic communication approach, and they draw comparisons between these two approaches and according to them, in the conventional communication approach managers focus on media and messages and come up with exciting ideas that capture the imagination.

Whereas in the strategic communication approach managers analyze the wider system and plan desired outcomes strategically. So it is not the, only the media only what is being said, only what is there, but they try and they take a much wider, much more comprehensive, much richer view of what is happening and then plan the desired outcomes according to that. Not only their understanding is not based only on what the media tells them, but they also look at other indications from the environment.

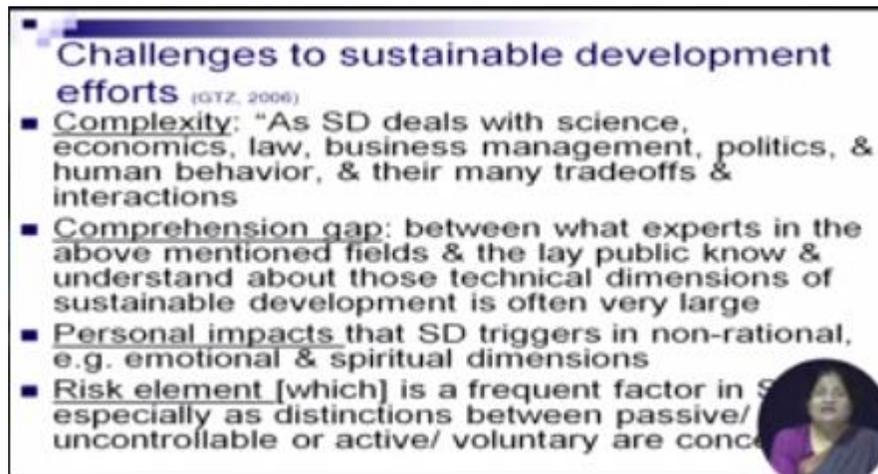
In the conventional communication approach the communication experts focus on convincing people individually while their social sphere is not analyzed. Whereas in the strategic communication approach the interventions focus on goals, audiences, and messages and that determined the media. So what is it that the media is capturing from the environment is what is focused on and that is where the interventions go, in the conventional communication approach communication is an end-of-pipe activity isolated from the rest of the project.

So, you know you do everything and then you just go into the community and tell people what you are doing and they are supposed to accept it. And in the strategic communication approach communication is fully integrated in a project from the start you first go and find out what the community wants get their inputs, and then share your ideas with them, then get their feedback, then go back and verify whether what we have understood is okay with them or not, whether you have understood it correctly or not then you formulate a plan, then go back and check with them etc..

So it is fully integrated in a project from the beginning in the conventional communication approach the content and message are secondary and cannot answer why or what questions, why are we doing, what are we doing, how are we going to do it, so it is just this is what we are going to do and that is the be-all and end-all. And in the strategic communication approach the target audiences are involved in planning they are involved in the why, the what, how the, where the, when of the interventions.

And, you know and all of these interventions are integrated with the values with the social fabric, with the cultural milieu of the target audiences, and that is how these two approaches differ the conventional communication approaches one way. This is what I have to give you, you take it or leave it strategic communication approaches I am one of you, I am not going to force development on you, I am going to facilitate development through you that is these strategic communication approach okay.

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**Challenges to sustainable development efforts** (GTZ, 2006)

- **Complexity:** "As SD deals with science, economics, law, business management, politics, & human behavior, & their many tradeoffs & interactions
- **Comprehension gap:** between what experts in the above mentioned fields & the lay public know & understand about those technical dimensions of sustainable development is often very large
- **Personal impacts** that SD triggers in non-rational, e.g. emotional & spiritual dimensions
- **Risk element [which]** is a frequent factor in SD especially as distinctions between passive/ uncontrollable or active/ voluntary are concerned



Some challenges to sustainable development efforts, the first is the complexity. As sustainable development deals with science economics, law, business management politics and human behavior and their many tradeoffs and interactions, variety of aspects are explored, variety of things are, you know there is an interplay of large number of scenarios and that makes sustainable development efforts, so complex. I may come up with a policy and I go and try and implement it in the community and there will be somebody who say, but it does not fit in with our culture, but it, but we do not understand it, but we are unable to do it, but the weather is not right, but we do not have the money for it.

But what is it going to do for us we do not like what it promises to do for us, one group may say we like it, the other one says we do not like it, but how will we carry it forward, how will our children benefit from it, how will our children be affected, how will our elders be benefited from it, how will it affect, what we think, what we do, why should we change the way we do things, we do not care what will happen, you know what is going on in the rest of the world.

So all of these questions will come up and that is the complexity of the situation comprehension gap between what the experts in the above-mentioned fields and the lay public know and understand about those technical dimensions of sustainable development is very large, what the experts feel you should be done is not what the community understands should be done okay.

And here I find it very relevant to mention an older book, this book I think was published sometime in the late 1990s and this book, the author of the book is P. Synod and the book is called everybody loves a good route and that book very beautifully captures the difference between policy and practice..

And I will give you the reference to that book please read it when you can. The book contains snippets, you know five to six page story is very readable stories about the poorest districts in India. And I am emotionally quite sensitive, so I cannot get through more than two or three stories at a time I just, you know it is so painful to read what people are going through, and you go into these regions and you try and tell them that, you know this is development start using cell phones, get into the internet of things, and, you know I will teach you what the internet of things is, and I will teach you what the internet is, and I will give you a mobile phone.

And they will say I do not have water I need to walk four or five kilometers to get a pot of water for my family. And so, you know those are the discussions and, you know you read about what people are facing in real life in rural India and that is when it hits you as to how large the gap between the experts and the labors in this. So that is what we are talking about, we cannot explain all these advanced technologies to people who are not able to have the basic things in life.

So again coming from the Indian institute of technology, I am not a Luddite I am not against technology, but I am more of a realist, and I feel that technology in development needs to at some point we connected with the real world and it has to, it should in some way one aspect or some aspect of it, should be connected to and should be applied to the real world, should help solve the problems of the real world before flying too high. So that is where I am coming from when I talk about this, and especially when we talk about development efforts, personal impact that sustainable development triggers and non-rational for example, emotional and spiritual dimensions.

So, you know we talk about development, we talk about community, we talk about doing new things, we talk about helping the community, how does it affect, we also need to see how it

affects the stakeholders, what kinds of emotions it generates, what do people feel about the efforts that are being put in by outsiders, what do they feel about outsiders coming and doing for them is something that needs to be engaged, how does it affect their spirituality their cultural beliefs.

Their traditions, their folklore etc., so those things also need to be considered and those will have an impact on how the efforts pan out, how the efforts are perceived I was talking about Berlo's model, I was talking about contextual interpretation of ideas, personal impacts will have an impact or personal filters will have an impact on how the messages are perceived by different communities.

The risk element is another aspect here which is a frequent factor in sustainable development especially as distinctions between passive, uncontrollable or passive or uncontrollable, or active or voluntary are concerned. So what kinds of risks that come up, you know we need to be aware that unexpected events that will disturb the course of action will come up when we are engaged in our efforts.

And that will impact how our efforts are perceived and communicated to the people who are going to be affected by our efforts.

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Strategic communication helps sustainable development by (GTZ, 2006)

- "Persuad[ing] a country's decision makers to adopt new policies & buil[ing] constituency & support at the same time
- Strengthen[ing] the capacity of municipal leaders, NGO representatives, & community-based organizations to manage their economic, ecologic & social resources sustainably
- Develop[ing] partnerships among governments, local communities, & NGOs to encourage people to work together for change
- Motivat[ing] people, e.g. private sector CEOs & engineers to adopt cleaner production technologies
- Rais[ing] awareness & support for sustainable development issues."

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Strategic communication helps sustainable development by a persuading, a country's decision-makers to adopt new policies and building constituency and support at the same time. So if we plan our communication we will be able to convince the decision-makers, we will be able to strengthen the capacity of municipal leaders, NGO representatives and community-based organizations to manage their economic ecologic and social resources sustainably.

We will be able to help develop partnerships among governments, local communities and NGOs to encourage people to work together for change. And I am reading this, this is pretty self-explanatory we will be able to motivate people for example, the private sector CEOs and engineers to adopt cleaner production technologies we will be able to help raise awareness and support for sustainable development issues, so various ways in which this is beneficial.

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■ **Strategic communication helps sustainable development by (Contd.)** (GTZ, 2000)

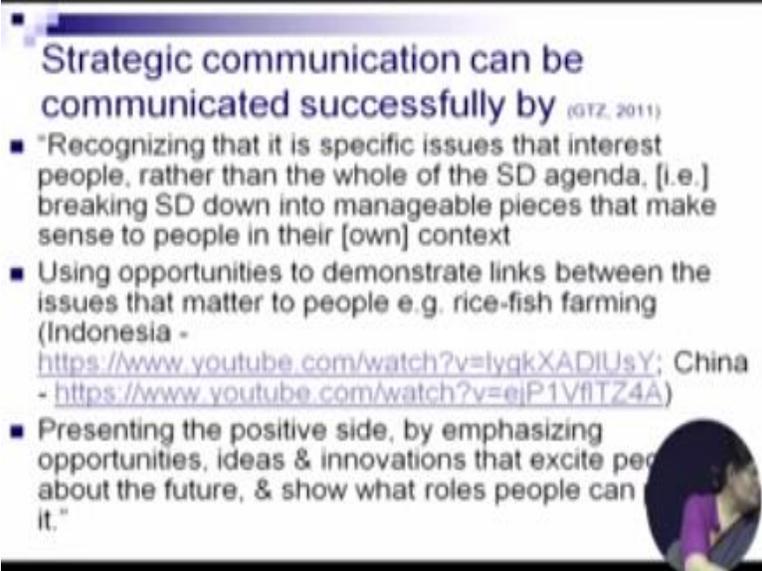
- "Accelerat[ing] & improv[ing] people's behavior, e.g. farmers' adoption of technologies & behaviors that lead to sustainable agriculture & forestry
- Convinc[ing] & help[ing] people to change their behavior, e.g. families to adopt environment friendly behaviors such as conserving water, protecting common water sources from contamination, putting garbage into bins, changing harmful fishing techniques, & preventing forest fires
- Generat[ing] excitement in an entire community that leads to community-wide behavior change
- Empower[ing] local people to speak for themselves & to continue their efforts into the future."

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We will be able to help accelerate and improve people's behavior for example farmers adoption of technologies and behaviors that leads to sustainable agriculture and forestry we will be able to help convince and help people to change their behaviors. For example, families to adopt environmental friend, environment friendly behaviors such as conserving water, protecting common water sources from contamination, putting garbage into bins changing harmful fishing techniques etc.

We will be able to help generate excitement in an entire community that leads to community-wide behavior change; we will also be able to help, to empower the local people to speak for themselves and to continue their efforts into the future. So when we, you know if we do things right if we are sensitive to the environment if we plan things we will be able to achieve all these goals.

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**Strategic communication can be communicated successfully by** (GTZ, 2011)

- "Recognizing that it is specific issues that interest people, rather than the whole of the SD agenda, [i.e.] breaking SD down into manageable pieces that make sense to people in their [own] context
- Using opportunities to demonstrate links between the issues that matter to people e.g. rice-fish farming (Indonesia - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyqkXADIU3Y>; China - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejP1VflTZ4A>)
- Presenting the positive side, by emphasizing opportunities, ideas & innovations that excite people about the future, & show what roles people can play in it."



Strategic communication can be communicated successfully by recognizing that it is specific issues that interest people rather than the whole of these strategic development agenda, which is when we break sustainable development down into manageable pieces that make sense to people in their own context, people will be more inclined to do what we are requesting them to do, what we are trying to facilitate in the environment.

As opposed to telling people to conserve water for the you know we say okay do not you know please save water for future generations know, that will not work. But if we tell people that look today, you know getting water from your bore well and indiscriminately not using it properly will lead to may be higher bills for you, why do you want to use so much water when you been save water.

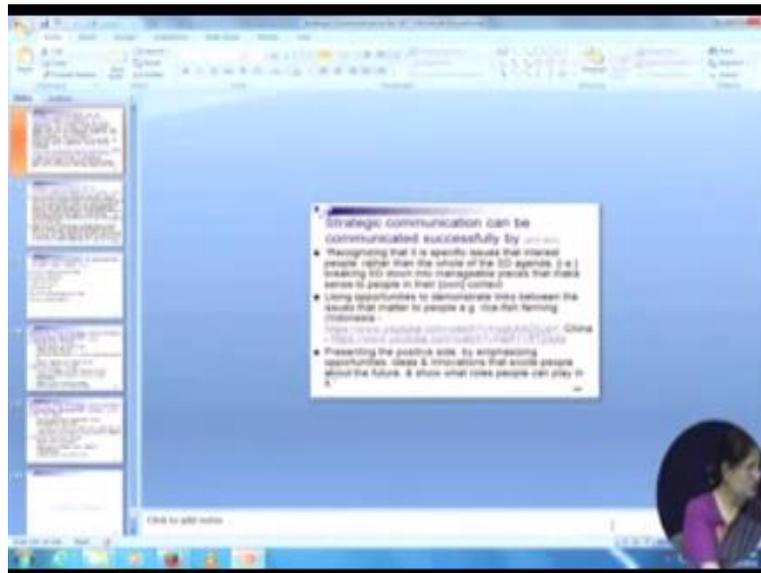
So, you know getting water out of a bore well requires the usage of electricity and we say your electricity bill will go down if you do not drop so much water. And maybe, you know tomorrow you will have more water to use, tomorrow if you do not use all of it today, so tomorrow if there is a drought then you can maybe pull up more water as opposed to you pulling out all the water today and not having enough water during drought condition.

So that kind of a thing can be done, so you know you break it up into manageable pieces, manageable information you tell them that 20 years from now your future generations will have twenty percent of the water that you have today and they will say I do not understand that or by cutting trees you are, the mountain behind your house will be out of snow and they say does not matter.

But then you tell them that if you cut trees maybe next summer the amount of water that you get in this summer will be less because there is no snow on the mountain. So what is going to melt and give you the water after all the water that we get in the mountains is primarily obtained from the rivers and where do these, these rivulets come from that is the melting snow, so we do not see snow on the mountain.

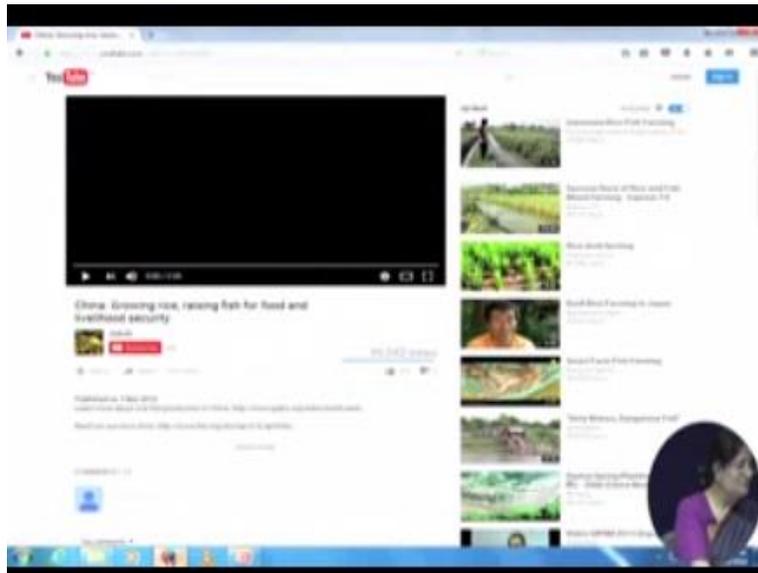
Then where will we get water from and that will strike a chord you know. So, I mean so manageable pieces of information, you know step by step we explain things to them, using opportunities to demonstrate links between the issues that matter to people. For example, rice fish farming and this is something that I really want to show to you, so I am going to take you to this very nice video there are two videos there is one from Indonesia which is about six minutes long, and there is one from China which is about two and a half minutes long. So I show you the one from China and this is available on YouTube.

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This is an FAO video.

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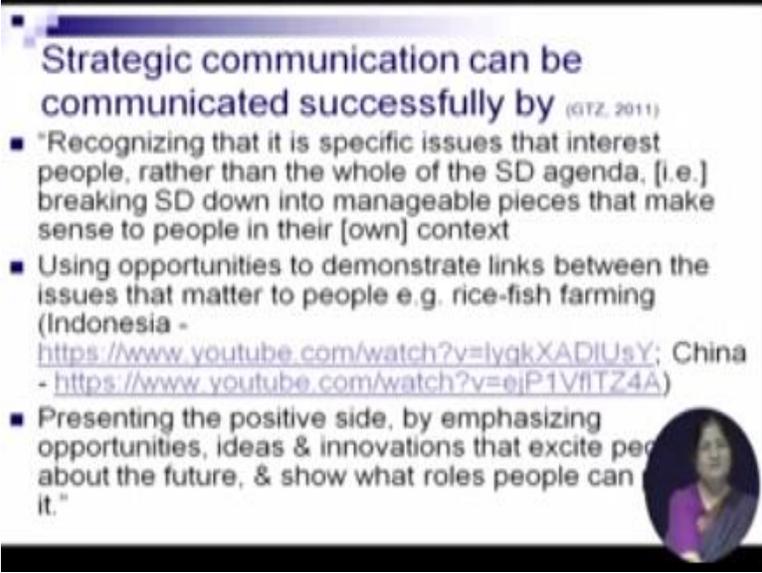


So let me show this to you.

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**Strategic communication can be communicated successfully by** (GTZ, 2011)

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- Using opportunities to demonstrate links between the issues that matter to people e.g. rice-fish farming (Indonesia - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lygkXADIUsY>; China - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejP1VfITZ4A>)
- Presenting the positive side, by emphasizing opportunities, ideas & innovations that excite people about the future, & show what roles people can play in it."



Okay, so very interesting video, very interesting way of creating sustainable environments, you know using the resources we have and that is what I keep realizing, and sharing with my students, you know if we were to just use the resources we had every single day we would be so much happier, a lot of times we do not realize the worth of the resources we have in our environments. So, you know one more way in which strategic communication or strategic communication efforts can be communicated successfully is by presenting the positive side, by emphasizing opportunities ideas and innovations that excite people about the future and show what roles people can play in it.

Instead of telling them constantly that, you know I am the expert I will do things, you know I will teach you how to do certain things by presenting the positive side of things by showing people the opportunities they have to come up with their own ideas for improving their own environments we can help people realize how important it is for them to strategies their development efforts.

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- Strategic communication can be communicated successfully by (Contd.) (GTZ, 2011)
- "Using good communications practice: Asking people what concerns them, & what they can do, & not just telling them what to do; spinning stories about what has worked, & not just presenting abstract recommendations; using straightforward language rather than jargon; knowing the audiences & their concerns & not just the subject & its complexities.
- Opening up workshops & conferences to other stakeholders who will be comfortable with the above, & not feel obliged to talk about SD among 'insiders' only. SD does not need 'dumbing down' to do this; it needs 'opening up' " (OECD, 2002, in GTZ, 2006)

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Strategic communication can be communicated successfully by using good communications practice asking people what concerns them and what they can do not just telling them what to do, spinning stories about what has worked and not just presenting abstract recommendation. So if I were to tell you about rice farming you would rice fish farming you would probably, it would probably not make so much for difference. But now that I have shown you it might strike accord somewhere, not just presenting abstract recommendations using straight forward language rather than jargon knowing the audiences and their concerns and not just subject and its complexities.

Opening up workshops and conferences to other stakeholders who will be more comfortable with the above and not feel obliged to talk about sustainable development among insiders only. So, you know sustainable development is not an experts topic, sustainable development is something that each one of us is affected by, each one of us is engaged in, it does not need dumping down to do this, it needs opening up and we say dumping down means we do not need to restrict the access to sustainable development discourse to only the experts, we do not need only the experts talking about sustainable development, we need non-experts, practitioners, community members talking about sustainable development.

This is too short course, otherwise maybe and you know and the people who I would like to bring here are not so fluent in the English language, but maybe at some point, you know if this really develops into a full-fledged program or a conference or something maybe I would really like you to, or like to share with you what is happening in the community around. And I do not even need to do that if you just look around, just keep your eyes and ears open you will see how communities are coming up with their own strategies for dealing with their environments for solving the problems in their environments and how these efforts are sustainable and how they are being communicated and I will show you some initiatives that have been taken in this area in the upcoming lectures.

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Strategic communication for development can be communicated or it can take place through mass media, through the public relations activities, through market research, through opinion polls, through phone-ins, you call a people you tell them what is going on you know, you have a helpline for agricultural problems in India, we have public awareness activities, we have public participation various ways in which mass media can facilitate strategic communication for development.

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**Bottomline: Role of strategic communication in sustainable development** (GTZ, 2006)

- "Recognizing: Through"
  - regular opinion/ attitude surveys,
  - media content analysis,
  - continuous networking with NGOs & consumer groups &
  - regular meetings with interest groups
- Gaining control: Through
  - KAP (Knowledge, Attitude, Practice) surveys,
  - integrating communication in the mix of policy instruments,
  - design of communication strategy,
  - communication with those involved"



The bottom line here is that strategic communication helps sustainable development recognize the problems, that the community has through regular opinion and attitude service, media content analysis, continuous networking with NGOs and consumer groups and regular meetings with interest groups through the people who are working in the community, through what the media is saying, and through focused collection of information through service. It also helps gain control over the environment through KAP service, knowledge, attitude, practice surveys.

Integrating communication in the mix of policy instruments, design of communication strategy and communication with those involved. So when we talk to people, when we talk, and when we discuss things with people we gain control over our environment and over our efforts in the environment. Solving the one is recognizing, then gaining control, then solving problems using communication as an independent and as a complementary instrument for the environment. Information on other instruments, laws, incentives extra. So we implement policies we put in checks and balances to control the environment.

So measurement and evaluation through qualitative research so we solve problems. Then we maintain this control over our environment through regular public information so the feedback,

so one is understanding, two is implementing, what gaining control knowing what we can and cannot do, three is going ahead and doing it, and fourth is feedback, everything is cyclically maintaining control over the environment over our efforts through regular public information. Feedback from the stakeholders, so stakeholders tell us what is working what is not. The community tells us what is working, what is not and we keep our eyes and ears open and we take that information and make it a part of what we are going to do next.

Reporting on changes and policy design and implementation giving our policy is the freedom to evolve based on the feedback we receive from our environments and updated opinion and attitude service again for the purpose of collecting feedback that we can use for further policy development, and that is how strategic communication facilitates sustainable development. We will stop here for now and we will continue the discussion in the next class is regarding different approaches, different ways in which strategic communication has been used in the process of sustainable development.

But I hope I have given you enough ideas to go and explore I would encourage you to go and YouTube look for example, you know look for ways in which strategic communication has been used in the area of sustainable development. And then we will discuss some more in the next class I wish I had face time with you and maybe I could hear about the great ideas that you have had as a result of some of the things that I have shared with you, but I look forward sharing some more with you in the next class, so thank you very much for listening.