3 Influence of Media Framing in Focusing Corporate Philanthropy on Environmental Care in Kenya

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Abstract

Awareness about the need to care for a shared environment has increased in Kenya, especially in the last decade. Corporations care for the environment through corporate philanthropy, which is an expression of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Media have been key in sensitizing Kenyans about the need for environmental care, through framing of messages on environmental issues. The focus of this paper was on how media influences corporations to focus on environmental care through the messages that they carry. The study was anchored in the Framing Theory that brings out how the media can set the environmental agenda for attitude change and focused action. Literature reviewed was on the environment, the role of the media in philanthropy, CSR and sustainable development (SD) agenda, environmental management in corporations and environmental education. This was a descriptive study that utilized questionnaires and in-depth interviews to collect data. The findings established that framing environmental issues through media reports by the Nation Media Group (NMG) mainly through the Nation newspaper and also through their FM radio stations greatly influenced environmental education, involvement by corporations in environmental initiatives, and the choice of environmental initiatives to engage in. The top environmental issues framed mainly through the Nation newspaper were tree planting, conserving forests and protecting water sources. Media highlighting of tree planting prioritized it as the environmental initiative of choice. Framing of environmental messages by the Nation newspaper set the environmental agenda and resulted in corporations as well as individuals channelling funds to environmental initiatives.

Keywords: Framing, media, philanthropy, environment, corporate social responsibility (CSR), environmental care

Introduction

In 2009 in Kenya, the environment was discussed almost daily through the various media outlets. This was because there was a food crisis with an estimated 10 million Kenyans facing starvation (*Daily Nation*, 10th August 2009, p.1). In addition, there was power rationing and Kenyans had to do without electricity three (3) days in a week. There was also water shortage as water levels in all lakes, rivers, dams and water reservoirs had gone down. Some rivers had even totally stopped flowing. Environmental specialists as well as the politicians attributed the calamity to the degradation of the environment. The crises affected all Kenyans and so environmental issues made media headlines almost daily. Environmental concern was at an all time high.

The need for environmental focus and care should, however, not be seasonal. Sood and Arora (2006) see the environment as one of the key development concerns that the economy should be sensitized of. They enumerate these key concerns as the environment, equity, poverty eradication and the building of human capacities for sustainable development. The environment has been cited as a key development driver in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 7th millennium development goal aims to ensure environmental sustainability. According to the UNDP website (http://www. Undp.org/basics. shtml retrieved on 5th April 2010), the MDGs were eight goals which were to be achieved by 2015 that would respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs were drawn from the actions and targets contained in the *Millennium Declaration* that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the *UN Millennium Summit* in September 2000. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report on MDGs that give the achievements after the set time period show that although deforestation has slowed, global greenhouse gas emissions continue their upward trend (UNDP, 2015). The battle for a sustainable environment is therefore still to be won: hence the need for continued and focused environmental care. Media could be the partner that helps bring this focus and motivation by creating awareness and educating the corporate through appropriately framed messages.

According to a report prepared for United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) by SustainAbility, a London-based corporate strategy consultancy, the media sector could become the dominant industry of the 21st century. No other industry will so powerfully influence how people and politicians think about philanthropy, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainable development (SD) priorities. The media have played a central role in defining and communicating the emerging CSR and SD agendas (SustainAbility, 2010). Media companies however have been both carriers and barriers when it comes to the CSR and SD agendas. The most critical issues like the environment and climate change, recycling, ozone layer depletion or even sustainable development are slow moving. Human beings however seem equipped to respond to big, noisy immediate threats and ignore problems that may present greater risks but which build more slowly. Media companies act according to commercial interests as they need to keep audiences and advertisers happy. These two combined, result in mainstream media poorly covering the critical issues of CSR and SD; hence being a barrier to propagating this agenda. There is need therefore for deliberate and sustained framing.

The Mau Forest, which is the largest water catchment area in Kenya, has been deforested at such a rate that both humans and animals have been endangered. Commenting on the Mau Forest crisis, a veteran journalist, Philip Ochieng, pointed out that nature is no respecter of its creations. To ensure balance, it will condemn to death its most developed species – even ourselves, if we continue on our present path of destruction (*Daily Nation*, 9th August 2009, p.11). The effects of climate change forced Kenyans to change their lifestyles as they had to go without electricity and water, and food prices skyrocketed. This, however, seemed to be quickly forgotten once the crises passed.

Communicating all these concerns to reach all Kenyans would most effectively be done through the media. This paper studied Nation Media Group (NMG) and its framing of environmental messages, to bring out what the media in general could do to help focus corporate philanthropy on environmental care in Kenya. The Nation newspaper is one of the leading newspapers in Kenya.

Definition of terms

Environment refers the surrounding and everything that affects an organism during its lifetime. It is therefore the sum total of water, air and land, the interrelationships among them and also with human beings, other living organisms and property. Environmental studies provide an understanding of the environment of our planet and the impact of human life upon the environment.

Corporate Philanthropy is an expression of CSR in an organization. According to Leisinger and Schmitt (2011), philanthropy describes voluntary, active, non-reciprocal efforts (financial, organizational, human resources, etc.) by an entity with the sole purpose of benefiting human beings, or fulfilling an unmet social need, regardless of any specific 'return on investment' for the donor. Corporate philanthropy that focuses on the environment is key to environmental sustainability.

Framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007). The basis of framing theory is that the media focuses attention on certain events or issues, and then places them within a field of meaning. Framing is important because it can raise the profile of public issues, and influence the attitudes and actions of the public towards those issues.

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored in the Framing Theory as propounded by Goffman (1974). The Framing Theory premise is that media provides a focus and an environment for reporting a story, and influencing how audiences will understand or evaluate it. Framing Theory holds that people interpret what is going on around their world through their primary framework. This interpretational framework is regarded as primary as it is taken for granted by the user. Goffman stated that there are two distinctions within primary frameworks: natural and social. Natural frameworks identify events as physical occurrences taking them literally and not attributing any social forces to the causation of events. Social frameworks view events as socially driven occurrences, due to the whims, goals, and manipulations on the part of other social players (people). Social frameworks are built on the natural frameworks. These frameworks and the frames that they create in our communication greatly influence how data is interpreted, processed, and communicated. According to Masscom theory Blog (2016), framing is in many ways tied very closely to agenda setting theory. Both focus on how media draws the public's eye to specific topics – in this way they set the agenda. But framing takes this a step further in the way in which the news is presented and creates a frame for that information. This is usually a conscious choice by journalists – in this case a frame refers to the way media as gatekeepers organize and present the ideas, events, and topics they cover. Framing is an unavoidable part of human communication – we all bring our own frames to our communications.

The basis of the Framing Theory is that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. The Framing Theory holds that how something is presented to the audience (called "the frame") influences the choices people make about how to process that information. Frames are abstractions that work to organize or structure message meaning. The most common use of frames is in terms of how the news media present the information they convey and the emphasis or importance they give to it. These frames are thought to influence the perception and the reception of the news by the audience. This is agenda setting that not only tells the audience what to think about (Agenda-Setting Theory), but also moves them to the second level of agenda setting and tells them how to think about that issue (the Framing Theory).

According to Smith (2011), framing deals with social construction of reality at two levels. The first is the perception of the phenomenon by the journalist, while the second is the interpretation of the phenomenon by the audiences. Framing provides rhetorical analysis of the text, an issue, or reporting of the issue, to identify perception and/or interpretation. Framing is about the use of metaphor, spin, story-telling, jargon, word choice and other narrative elements; it is an exercise in power and persuasion. Whoever tells the story first has power to shape it to persuade and manipulate audiences in the desired direction.

Research design

The study used descriptive survey design. According to Chandran (2004) and Neuman (2011), descriptive research leads to profile development of a situation or a community of people and describes a process or a relationship. Van Der Walt (2006) states that in a descriptive study, the emphasis can be on an in-depth description of a specific topic, or the frequency of an occurrence. Babbie (2013) says that the descriptive approach is typical when a researcher examines a new interest or when the subject of study itself is relatively new. Descriptive survey was therefore appropriate for researching the influence of media framing on focusing corporate philanthropy on environmental issues, which is a relatively new area of study.

Literature Review

Literature reviewed was on the key concepts covered by the paper. It covered areas like the environment, the role of the media in philanthropy, CSR and sustainable development (SD) agendas, philanthropy, environmental management in corporations and environmental education, as discussed below.

Corporate Philanthropy

Philanthropy has been defined as goodwill to fellow members of the human race, especially an active effort to promote human welfare. Ehrlich (2013) defines corporate philanthropy as the act of a corporation or business promoting the welfare of others, generally through charitable donations of funds or time. Corporate philanthropy, or corporate giving, is considered to be a specific type, or an expression, of CSR activity. CSR refers to the act of corporations donating profits or resources to non-profit organizations or public projects. Corporations most commonly donate cash, but also can donate the use of facilities, property, services and advertising support. Some corporations set up employee volunteer groups who donate their time to specific projects. Corporate giving is often handled by the corporation directly; however, it may also be done through a company foundation. According to Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy CECP (2016), business has always had a contract with society – expectations from a variety of stakeholders that a company must fulfill in order to earn its freedom to operate and achieve success. Today, companies are facing tectonic shifts in social expectations. Customers have more ability to put pressure on companies to meet their expectations for contributions to the public good. Shareholders are exerting pressure to increase companies' social presence; and increasing attention is being paid to indirect stakeholders, such as lawmakers, regulatory agencies, the news media, community activists, and non-profit organizations. All of these groups can influence, and may even redefine, the social contract and what it means to a company to fulfill or exceed it.

According to Korngold (2014), corporate philanthropy is no longer about charity. Multinational corporations have the global footprint, financial and human resources, and profit incentive to solve the world's most challenging problems, including poverty, climate change, education, healthcare, and human rights. In the past, some companies provided charitable contributions to NGOs and nonprofits, primarily in communities where their employees lived and worked. But philanthropy was tenuous because it was not closely enough tied with the company's primary purpose, and shareholders sometimes questioned its validity. Korngold further states that more recently, however, some companies have begun to realize that there are opportunities in bringing their expertise, technology, and worldwide workforce to bear in fixing social problems. Addressing these problems may be advantageous to the company – by reducing costs, such as energy-efficiency; mitigating risks – such as protecting natural resources that are vital to their supply chains; or presenting opportunities to develop and market goods and services –

such as building smart cities to improve citizen services. Korngold (2014) contends that companies are uniquely equipped to address the world's most daunting challenges, and that some corporations are already beginning to do so. Korngold, on one hand, notes that while NGOs and nonprofits have worthy missions, they do not have the resources and scalability sufficient to make transformational progress. Governments, on the other hand, have not been able to make binding and actionable agreements to deal with these problems. The challenge is whether companies will be burdened with finding solutions to social, economic, and environmental issues. They however have a responsibility to participate, after all, elements of the business sector have sometimes been – and even continue to be – responsible for creating human rights abuses, environmental degradation, and economic injustices that continue to plague the world today. It is about joining hands and forces to address challenges to humanity, to ensure the world is a better place to live in for all.

Corporate Social Responsibility

In a 2009 research by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), corporate social responsibility (CSR) in sub-Saharan Africa was found to be in its infancy. As a result, 'social and environmental activities of individuals and companies remained scattered' (p.9). CSR development interventions can greatly help to increase knowledge, consolidate effort and develop new skills. The most important contribution CSR can make will be to change people's values and attitudes. The BMZ survey established that the key to addressing CSR hindering and promoting factors in sub-Saharan Africa lies in a systemic and context-sensitive approach that relies on the potential of people, organizations and communities to design and implement their own solutions within global frameworks (p.11). The way in which companies interpret the social realities of the environment within which they will be conducting their businesses, will therefore be a defining aspect of their future success.

Manning (2006) sees CSR as one of the 'umbrella' labels under which many of the emerging issues are addressed. Manning lists some of these issues as human rights, health, renewable energy, child labour and eco-efficiency. This list tallies to a great extent with Wynhoven's (2006) global compact performance model's key areas that he states an organization needs to address in order to be a good corporate citizen. Wynhoven names these key areas as human rights, labour standards, environment and anti-corruption, Bergmans

(2006) echoes these sentiments and states that there is a need of turning CSR into a primary company process, and that this entails more than isolated projects linked to the company identity.

Werther & Chandler (2006) see CSR as a strategy becoming increasingly relevant for businesses today because of four trends. These are: increasing affluence that leads to choice and payment of a premium for trusted brands; changing social expectations that leads to more being expected from companies whose products are bought; globalization; and free flow of information. Free flow of information instantaneously brings CSR lapses to the global media, leading to conviction by the media. Environmental awareness and concern for ecological sustainability make society penalize firms that seem indifferent to their environmental responsibilities. Kotler and Lee (2005) on the aspect of strategic CSR point out that in the last decade, directional signals point to increased corporate giving, and increased corporate reporting on social responsibility initiatives. They draw attention to the apparent transition from giving as an obligation to giving as a strategy. Lantos (2001) recognizes the pressure on businesses to be socially responsible and states that in the twenty-first century, the public demands that businesses make social issues a part of their strategies. Lantos states that today, managers continually meet demands from stakeholder groups to devote resources to CSR.

As people have become more aware of the direct and indirect negative impacts of business activities on the natural and social environment, ways have been sought to control businesses. Economic and legal means have been used to try and make businesses act responsibly. The assumption that businesses only exist to make profit is no longer tenable. Daft (2008) points out that the purely profit-maximizing view is no longer considered an adequate criterion of performance. According to Werther and Chandler (2006), the trend is to merge pursuit of profit with integration of CSR within corporate strategy. This study sought to establish what initiatives were regarded as CSR in Kenya in the manufacturing and service sectors and whether CSR is incorporated in company policies. It also investigated whether environment was a key concern and whether it was prioritized in choice of CSR initiatives.

Media in building the Philanthropy, CSR and SD agendas

Corporate philanthropy through CSR and SD agendas are often ignored by the media since they do not fit mainstream news preferences and patterns of coverage. They are generally about process and not event. According to SustainAbility (2010), mainstream news exhibit fairly standard characteristics which include a tendency to focus on events rather than trends, a propensity to report negativity, conflict and drama, discomfort with ambiguity and complexity and constraints on column inches and broadcast minutes. In addition, they seem to favour infotainment over in-depth analysis and investigation.

Environmental stories have been said to ooze, not break (SustainAbility, 2010) and so do not grab attention until disaster strikes. They also require more space than others as there is need to educate. This is because often, CSR and SD stories offer complexity and ambiguity instead of clarity and certainty. This results in waves of interest in CSR and SD issues which are often triggered by a happening which would fit the characteristics of mainstream media interests. An example is the depletion of the ozone layer story that broke in 1985. As SustainAbility (2010) notes, the TV images shown then had great impact on public opinion. The ozone hole, and especially its link with skin cancer, woke people up to the existence of global environmental risks. The hole was huge and growing and by year 2000, it covered 11 million square miles. Since 1992, the level of media interest and coverage has waned until today (2016), you hear little or nothing about it. Such reasons deceptively make key concerns appear unimportant and hence the need for deliberate media focus on them.

Nation Media Group's environmental initiatives

Nation Media Group (NMG) participated in environmental initiatives and framed environmental stories to mobilize conservation action from corporations. A study carried out by Nyaga (2011) shows that conservation of the Mau forest catchment area was spearheaded by NMG, through their Nation newspaper, and also through their FM radio stations. They partnered with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and Equity Bank, among others. The aim was to raise 300 million Kenya Shillings in three years to plant a million trees in the Mau. Advertisements through the Nation newspaper and billboards were ongoing (Appendix A) urging Kenyans to donate seedlings towards this cause. Since public debate on restoring the Mau Forest picked up pace around 2008/9, many corporations intensified or took up tree planting as an environmental initiative. The Nation newspaper was giving free coverage of the tree planting in the Mau forest to all who partnered with them. Corporations also often involved their employees and their families in tree planting drives. NMG employees could have ranked this initiative highest due to personal participation and memories from such a day out. Conserving forests was second and protecting water sources third. The said public debate on the Mau and other water towers in Kenya aroused a very keen interest in conservation of our forests. This was reinforced by water and electricity rationing in Kenya that saw sections of the country, especially urban areas, go without water for days, weeks or even months at a time. Electricity was also switched off three (3) days in a week greatly affecting production of goods and services in the country. The bulk of Kenya's electricity is hydro-based so affected by low water volumes in rivers. Media reports and public education or information at the time indicated that both lack of water and electricity were due to the destruction of forests, especially our water towers. The Nation, Citibank and Equity Bank featured prominently in conserving forests. The Nation carried out public education on the Mau and the environment in general, through their various media. The Aberdares fencing was also an NMG initiative and was in their view very successful. It involved partnering with other corporations to fence the Aberdares to stop human–wildlife conflict. This helped keep the animals in the park and away from farms, thus saving the lives of both humans and animals. It also ensured farms were not destroyed thus avoiding food shortage.

The NMG had a lot of PSAs in their newspapers and programmes on their radio and television stations. They then launched a line, 5254, through which Kenyans could participate. Once a short text message (sms) was sent to this number, KES. 100 was deducted from each sender to go towards tree planting in the Mau. When the NMG started the tree planting campaign, the response was fast and passionate. A total of 1,000 messages were received even before official advertising commenced. The NMG also had interactive Q FM and Easy FM programmes where the listeners' views on the Mau were sought. The selected best responses won a helicopter ride over the Mau. The response was very good. The NMG also flew journalists over the Mau so that they could see the destruction and convey its magnitude to their readers, listeners and viewers. Highlighting tree planting by the media acted as prioritization of this initiative which saw many companies engage in tree planting. This was the only environmental initiative the majority of Kenyan companies participated in.

Both the Mau and the Aberdares are very important water towers in Kenya, supplying the life sustaining liquid. The destruction of Kenyan forests in the recent past has seen forest cover reduced from the required minimum of 10% to 2%. This has resulted in drought, famine and death, as well as electric power shortages. The 2008/9 drought brought this point vividly home. The NMG spearheaded efforts to save the water towers and to create public awareness to ensure sustainability. A major forest conservation and water source protection activity is tree planting or stopping the cutting of trees or logging in our forests. The same public debate on the Mau and other water towers in Kenya aroused a very keen interest in conservation of our forests. For the first time in Kenya, calls to flush out illegal settlers in the forest and restore ideal forest cover became a matter of concern not just for the government, but also for industry, religious institutions, civil rights bodies, foreign missions and even individuals. Understanding the situation created anger against destruction and a passion for restoration and conservation that is still driving this agenda to-date.

Partnering with other corporations for greater impact and more awareness in the future was indicated by 43.8% of the interviewees. It was through partnering that fencing the Aberdares and the "*Save the Mau*" campaign were carried out (Appendix A). The NMG is one corporation that was involved in both and the pooled funds accomplished much more than any one corporate could have done. There were interviewees who indicated that focused effort would have achieved much more and contributed better to the environmental cause, as the tree planting initiative demonstrated. As seen from the copies of billboards, media coverage and internet articles (e.g. the copy shown in Appendix B), tree planting to save the Mau forest and other water towers or to mitigate climate change was highlighted in the media especially during the drought of 2009. This served to highlight this as a national environmental priority and resulted in focus on tree planting for many corporations, as a CSR in environment initiative. Tree planting was not only the highest ranked, but was also the only initiative indicated by all the sampled corporations. Partnering with others also influenced choice of initiatives as ability to pool funds has been an attraction to corporations. Partnering with Nation, for example, to reforest the Mau gave the partner corporations publicity and also motivation to carry on since the other corporations become accountability partners. Partnering will gain even more importance in addressing future environmental concerns.

Another contribution by the NMG was that media highlighting of an initiative served to prioritize it and make it an obvious choice. Tree planting was the only initiative all corporations participated in. The main reason was that during the drought of 2008/09 and the Mau Forest debate there was a lot of media coverage about degradation of forests and the need to plant trees. There were appeals too for corporations to engage in or contribute to tree planting. All these served to prioritize tree planting and it was indeed the only initiative all the sampled corporations engaged in.

Environmental management in corporations

Munyua and Onyari (1996) define the environment as the totality of conditions and influences that affect the way things live and develop. Things here refer to both the living and non-living like rocks, water, air composition, soil acidity and temperature. Corporations have been known to take initiatives that respond to environmental challenges thus contributing to better management of the environment, as the United Nations (UN) Benchmark Corporate Environmental Survey (1993) found out. This survey of 400 companies was undertaken to measure and evaluate the phenomenon of corporate greening, also called corporate citizenship and corporate responsiveness, as it is anchored in corporate management policies and practices. The survey found out that a profound transformation occurred in the 1990s in corporate management of environmental and occupational matters, where numerous corporations took up the challenges of environmental concerns and were enthusiastically managing their environmental impacts.

In the UN Report (1993), the Secretary General for UN Conference on Environment and Development, Maurice Strong, captured the mood thus:

> "We have already begun the transition to a new era in which environmental issues will increasingly drive our economic life. The transition to economically sound and sustainable development is as imperative for the continued viability of our economy as it is for our environmental security. Every business that impacts on the environment must accommodate the fact that the environment will have an important impact on its business."

Environmental issues, as the above quote clearly brings out, are tied up with economic ones, and sustainable development. This study aimed to find out whether for NMG, as a part of Kenyan media, environmental issues in any way drove economic life, and whether this was reflected in their framing of news.

Environmental Education

The National Environmental Education and Awareness Initiative (EEAI) in Kenya was launched in 2008 under the then Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources. EEAI is a government initiative to ensure its citizens are sensitized about the need to conserve the environment. According to the ministry's website www.environment.go.ke , the goal of EEAI is to enhance voluntary initiatives and participation in environmental conservation activities by every Kenyan through education and awareness campaigns. This is expected to foster inclusiveness and partnerships in environmental conservation and management. The objectives of EEAI include increasing environmental awareness and participation, mobilizing the general public to get involved in the protection and conservation of the environment and encouraging media to embrace positive and informative environmental coverage. This initiative, if effectively implemented, would ensure more corporate philanthropy focused on environmental initiatives as education would sensitize corporations too on the need to fund environmental causes. Unfortunately, eight years later (2016), the initiative has not been implemented and the most memorable activity may still be its launch.

Parker (2005) notes that environmental education is necessary to create awareness of the relationship between sustainability and economic progress. Parker adds that citizens need to be involved in the development of environmental policies and practices and they should come to consensus on solutions to problems. Such consensus needs to flow from informed deliberations hence the importance of environmental education. The study aimed to find out whether NMG framed environmental education which would ensure an environmental focus in CSR and informed choices in environmental initiatives.

Findings

The key finding of the study was that framing environmental issues through media reports by the NMG greatly influenced environmental education, involvement by corporations in environmental initiatives, and the choice of initiatives. The top environmental issues framed through nation newspapers were tree planting, conserving forests and protecting water sources. The highest ranked environmental initiatives were tree planting and conserving forests. A finding that emerged on reasons for choice of environmental initiatives was that media highlighting of an initiative served to prioritize it and make it an obvious choice. Tree planting was the only initiative all corporations participated in. The main reason was that during the drought of 2008/09 and the Mau Forest debate (Appendix A), there was a lot of media coverage about degradation of forests and the need to plant trees. There were appeals too for corporations to engage in or contribute to tree planting. The choice by the NMG to get involved and to lead the initiative set the environmental agenda and resulted in participating corporations as well as individuals channelling funds to environmental initiatives.

Discussion of findings

A key finding of the study indicated that media framing of environmental issues influenced environmental education, uptake of environmental initiatives, and the choice of initiatives by corporations. This is because framing educated the public about the need to care for the environment, and the benefits that accrue for doing so. Although most corporations in Kenya have CSR funds, many do not seem to have developed policies on the strategic use of such funds. The results have been that use of CSR funds has tended to focus on short-term highly visible humanitarian aid like hunger alleviation and medical camps. These give the corporations recognition as the media cover the fully branded functions of handing over donations or a medical camp in progress. It is these same CSR funds that, if directed to environmental care, could bring changes that help solve a humanitarian and economic need like self-sufficiency in food production, that would alleviate hunger. Media framing influenced use of available CSR funds directing them to the environment. It is media framing that helped corporations prioritize the environment. The highest ranked environmental initiatives were tree planting and conserving forests, which were what the media highlighted. This gives a direct link between what was framed, and what corporations took up. The corporations also stated that the reason for choice of environmental initiatives was that media highlighting of an initiative served to prioritize it and make it an obvious choice.

This study brings out the importance and need of framing environmental issues. The agenda-setting power of the media benefitted the environment, and framing helped the corporations knowledgeably choose the environment for their CSR initiatives. Media houses have the means of reaching the public with critical information. Partnership with the government, corporations and the media can help address very critical, but often ignored issues, like environmental care. The fact that governments usually do not have adequate resources to address all critical needs makes such a partnership more desirable. This would focus use of CSR funds on initiatives that give long-term solutions, and that are often too big for any one entity to handle. Framing highlights the need, creates understanding and could foster partnerships to address the issue.

Conclusions

The NMG sees its current critical role as carrying out environmental education at every opportunity it can get. An aware public will care better for the environment. People need to be taught the connection between climate change and lack of electricity and water as well as environmental degradation. They see CSR as expressed in corporate philanthropy focused on the environment as a driver of many firms' strategic outlook. As part of prioritizing the environmental agenda, the NMG has taken to itself the role of mobilizing other corporations for big projects with greater impact on the environment, as they did with the Mau and the Aberdares. Their advantage is that they have the means of communication and they can use them without going very much out of their way and at minimum cost. The NMG also contributed advertising space to other companies like Total Kenya and gave them free coverage in their Eco-Challenge tree planting campaign. This deliberate support to those engaged in environmental initiatives played a key role in encouraging other corporations to focus on the environment.

Education remained the one most important answer to dealing with environmental degradation. Education was also indicated as key in ensuring sustainable environmental care. For Kenyans to passionately care for the environment, they need to know the reasons for caring. They can be educated so that they know the reasons and trained so that they know how to care. The NMG is strategically placed to provide such leadership and education. A recommendation from the study is that environmental education be part of the curricula in institutions from kindergarten, primary, secondary and college levels. This just shows how education is key to environmental care. Continuous sensitization about pertinent environmental issues to all stakeholders should be part of this education. It is all about communicating for change of perceptions and attitudes that will lead to the desired sustainable interventions that will ensure a good environment.

Recommendations

In its planning, legislation and budgeting, the government needs to demonstrate its commitment to environmental education and stewardship.

The government needs to give leadership in the area of policy, law enforcement and prioritizing the environment. This needs to be done to ensure no further degradation takes place. On repairing the damage already done, the government needs to continue evicting settlers from the Mau and other water towers so that restoration can commence. Since some of the forest grabbers as reported in the media are senior politicians and government officials, involvement of leadership and intervention of the Kenyan President may be critical to stem the impunity.

On education, the national Environmental Education and Awareness Initiative (EEAI) is a very commendable move. The Ministry of Environment needs, however, to move beyond the launch and implement the initiative. It is only the communicated initiatives that people will be aware of and will act on. The government's many studies and plans need to be communicated so that the focus and leadership needed can be there and benefit the environment.

Corporates should partner and address a prioritized CSR area at a time especially in regard to the environment. The government is the best placed to prioritize since it has jurisdiction over all sectors. If such prioritization is not, however, coming from the government, then corporates should get together as much as possible and pool funds and other resources for better impact. This partnership will focus – not scatter – effort, and give clear criteria on choice of initiatives.

Training CSR professionals should be given priority as they will guide the companies into best CSR choices and practice as part of the company's success strategy. Such officers could work under the corporate affairs manager to ensure any CSR initiative is not only strategic for business, but becomes effective corporate expression.

The framing and agenda-setting power of the media was evident in this study. Once the media prioritized tree planting in the Mau and made appeals for Kenyans to donate seedlings, the response was overwhelming even before the campaign was fully launched. If the media could commit to communicating matters of environmental concern without politicizing them, there are many people of goodwill willing to help with real issues. If people are given hope and the true picture, they will be empowered to make the right decisions. The media could help focus effort and resources on what can really make a difference in environmental education and stewardship for sustainable development.

Other educational initiatives by the media like the NMG's Horizon that highlights environmental matters sensitize the public too about what is new or of concern. The media has an upper hand in communication since this is their core business and could contribute to the environment by deliberately focusing on environmental concerns. They could go further like the NMG did with the Aberdares and the Mau forests, and spearhead initiatives to protect and restore.

Including environmental education as a major part of the curriculum was a recurring theme with both respondents and the interviewee. The recommendation was that it should start at an early age. The educators at all levels from kindergarten to the universities should develop age-appropriate environmental education materials in a bid to make environmental education part of our everyday experience.

Kenyans need to personally embrace the environmental message and act to enhance environmental care at an individual level as this is what will bring the real change. The corporate decision makers are individuals first before they assume their corporate role. The educators, journalists and editors who publish environmental stories are also individuals first. There is need for each to passionately embrace the environmental conservation message so that they can passionately pass it on. Environmental care should therefore not be left to the government or corporations, or even to National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) or environmental activists. Every Kenyan should take personal responsibility to care for the environment or to make decisions on behalf of their organizations that do not harm the environment.

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Appendix A: Spearheading campaign to save the Mau water tower

Appendix B: Framing the 2009 drought in Kenya

MEDICS TRANSFERS HALTED OVER MINISTRIES FEUD
Turf war between Nyong'o and Mugo may adversely affect service delivery
BACK PAGE

DAILY NATION

NAIROBI, MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2009

GOVERNMENT

Food: Next crisis after water and electricity

Mostly likely food security scenario, July to September 2009

KEY
Food Insecurity Severity:

BAD SIGNS

LIVESTOCK: Deaths and migration over long distances in search of water and pasture. Increase in diseases due to lack of water for spraying. Price of cattle falls to between Sh2,000 to Sh3,000 in Kajiado and other areas.

HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION: Turkana, Mandera, Marsabit/Laisamis and Samburu: One in every five children is not getting enough to eat. About 40 people reported to have died due to drought.

CONFLICTS: Clashes between KWS and herders who invade game parks in search of pasture and water. Also cases of farmers using up rivers in irrigation, denying herders water downstream.

With 10 million people in need of aid and no rain in sight, Cabinet meets to figure out what to do

By MUCHEMI WACHIRA

The Cabinet will meet in emergency session tomorrow to agree on steps to prevent mass starvation across the country.

The session will discuss the report of a sub-committee which paints an alarming picture of the food situation.

The report was given to the President two weeks ago and partly discussed at Cabinet last Friday. The government believes more than 10 million need food aid and the committee has made proposals on what needs to be done.

Compiled by a cross-section of ministries, it details the shortage of food and water for people and livestock.

Only parts of Nyanza and Western provinces together with a section of Nakuru and some parts of Meru and Embu are generally food secure, the Kenya Red Cross said in a report at the weekend.

The drought is so severe that it has compromised food security in areas such as Rift Valley Province and Central

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POLITICS

Mau Forest grabbers to face court, warns Raila

By DAN OTIENO and GEOFFREY RONO

Prime Minister Raila Odinga yesterday warned leaders who grabbed Mau Forest and sold it to small farmers that they will be prosecuted.

In a swing through the Rift Valley, the Prime Minister appealed directly to the voters, bypassing MPs who have been hostile to the eviction of settlers in the forest.

Without mentioning names, Mr Odinga said some of the MPs from the region benefited from land in the country's biggest source of water, which they later sub-divided and sold to the farmers.

"The leaders are fighting for their own rights because they are the ones who grabbed the land, sub-divided it and sold it to the small people but we want them to know that we will take back the land and prosecute them," he said.

Mr Odinga said the govern-

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Mr Odinga

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