

Vernacular Radio Broadcasting And Cultural Preservation As Strategies For Environmental Health Policy Framework

INAKU K. EGERE¹ & SUNDAY, SUNEBAI SAMUEL²

Centre for the Study of African Cultures and Communication, Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, University of Calabar

¹Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8626-6808>

*Corresponding Author: SUNDAY, SUNEBAI SAMUEL

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<p><i>Despite a robust array of policy frameworks addressing sanitation, waste management and pollution control, Nigeria continues to grapple with systemic environmental health crises. This paper contends that the primary impediment to policy success is not a lack of regulatory structure, but a "communicative rift", a failure of top-down, technocratic dissemination to resonate with Nigeria's linguistically and culturally diverse populace. Through a critical analysis of urban centers including Lagos, Port Harcourt and Aba, and other urban centres, the study demonstrates how the marginalization of indigenous knowledge and local languages results in poor policy appraisal and stagnant behavioural change. The research proposes vernacular radio broadcasting as a pivotal strategic asset for environmental governance. By situating radio within the theoretical frameworks of participatory communication and cultural preservation, the paper argues that indigenous-language media can bridge the gap between abstract policy and everyday ecological practice. While highlighting the potential for increased community agency, the study also addresses critical barriers, including the politicization of airwaves, infrastructure limitations and the necessity for professional capacity building. The paper concludes by advocating for a paradigm shift in Nigerian environmental policy, one that transitions from informational "publicity" to a participatory model that centers culture and language. It recommends the formal integration of vernacular broadcasters as strategic policy partners to ensure sustainable, community-led environmental health outcomes.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>Broadcasting, Communication, Culture, Environmental, Framework. Health Policy, Participatory, Preservation, Radio, & Vernacular.</i></p>
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<p>Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.</p> <p>Citation: Inaku K. Egere, & Sunday Sunebari Samuel. (2026). Vernacular radio broadcasting and cultural preservation as strategies for environmental health policy framework. UKR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (UKRJAHSS), 2(4), 34-41.</p>	

Introduction

Environmental health challenges have intensified across culturally diverse societies, particularly in contexts where ecological degradation converges with poverty, fragile infrastructure and complex linguistic landscapes. Problems such as waste mismanagement, unsafe water sources, environmental pollution and climate-related health risks are not merely technical failures but are deeply entangled with everyday cultural practices and local epistemologies. Yet, in many settings, environmental health policies remain removed from the lived realities of affected communities, often articulated in formal or official languages that neither reflect nor resonate with indigenous modes of

understanding. This disjunction raises critical questions about how environmental health knowledge is communicated, interpreted and enacted within culturally heterogeneous populations.

Recent scholarship in public health communication has drawn sustained attention to the limitations of conventional, centralised models of policy dissemination. Such top-down approaches typically presume a linear transmission of information from experts to passive recipients, neglecting the cultural frameworks through which communities interpret health messages. As Airhihenbuwa (1995, p. 5) argues, "Culture is not an external variable to health

behaviour but its very foundation.” This perspective contrasts sharply with technocratic designs that treat cultural context as incidental. Furthermore, Nutbeam (2000) emphasizes that health communication divorced from its social milieu fails to translate cognitive awareness into sustainable behavioral change, thereby eroding policy efficacy.

Consequently, the nexus of communication, culture, and health policy has emerged as a critical site of scholarly inquiry. Communication is not a neutral conduit for policy transmission but a social process that determines trust, legitimacy, and civic participation. Freire (1970, p. 72) underscores this dialogical necessity, noting that “authentic communication cannot exist where dialogue is denied.” Similarly, Waisbord (2014) contends that health policies gain traction only when embedded in communicative practices that recognize collective identity. Thus, environmental health governance must be re-envisioned as a communicative enterprise rather than a purely administrative function. Within this landscape, vernacular radio broadcasting occupies a distinctive, albeit under-researched, position.

Beyond information dissemination, vernacular radio serves as a vehicle for cultural preservation. Local proverbs and oral traditions often encode indigenous ecological knowledge (IEK) that promotes environmental stewardship. When health messages are framed within these cultural repertoires, they acquire moral authority. Servaes (2008) posits that culturally grounded communication enhances policy legitimacy by aligning external interventions with internal value systems. Similarly, Obijiofor (2015, p. 113) argues that indigenous language media sustain the “collective memory and ethical orientation” necessary for long-term behavioural shifts.

However, the reviewed literature reveals three critical connected areas: vernacular radio broadcasting, cultural preservation and environmental health policy in Nigeria. While each body of work offers valuable insights independently, there remains a notable absence of integrative studies that examine how vernacular radio can simultaneously preserve culture and function as a strategic instrument within environmental health policy frameworks. This gap provides the intellectual foundation for the present research, which seeks to bridge communication studies, cultural analysis and environmental health policy by foregrounding vernacular radio as a site of convergence.

Therefore, this paper argues that vernacular radio must be recognized as a strategic pillar of environmental health frameworks in linguistically diverse societies. It contends that policies marginalizing local languages risk structural failure and poor sustainability. By foregrounding vernacular radio as both a communicative and cultural

resource, this study seeks to bridge the persistent gap between policy design and community engagement, advocating for a model that speaks from within the communities it serves. Ultimately, it advances the position that meaningful environmental health reform requires not only scientific expertise but also culturally situated communication structures that speak from within, rather than merely to, the communities they seek to serve.

Statement of the Problem

Despite Nigeria’s expanding body of environmental health policies, a persistent and concrete challenge remains the weak translation of policy intent into everyday environmental health practices within urban communities. In major cities such as Port Harcourt, Lagos and Aba, recurrent problems including indiscriminate waste disposal, open drainage systems, air pollution from informal industrial activities and unsafe water sources continue to undermine public health. These challenges persist not primarily because of the absence of policy frameworks, but because of ineffective public engagement and communication strategies.

Environmental health directives are predominantly disseminated through formal, centralised channels, often articulated in English and technical registers that exclude large segments of the urban population. Market traders, artisans, waterfront residents and inhabitants of informal settlements are frequently positioned as passive recipients rather than active interpreters of policy messages. In Port Harcourt, for example, repeated government advisories on waste segregation and air quality during episodes of soot pollution have produced limited behavioural change especially at the community level. Similarly, in Lagos and several other Nigerian cities, sanitation regulations and flood-control campaigns are often ignored or misunderstood, contributing to seasonal outbreaks of cholera and other preventable diseases.

This pattern reveals a structural weakness within Nigeria’s environmental health policy framework: the failure to embed policy communication within the linguistic and cultural contexts through which urban residents understand environmental risk, civic responsibility and collective action. Policies tend to prioritise regulatory enforcement and technical compliance over participatory, culturally grounded communication. As a result, policy messages frequently lack social resonance, leading to uneven compliance, misinterpretation, and erosion of public trust.

As long as environmental health policies continue to privilege top-down enforcement mechanisms at the expense of culturally situated communication, their impact will remain limited and unsustainable. The problem, therefore, is not merely one of policy design or institutional

capacity, but of communicative disconnect, one that undermines the effectiveness of environmental health interventions in Nigeria's linguistically and culturally diverse urban spaces.

Literature Review

Vernacular Radio Broadcasting and Community Health Communication

Scholarship on vernacular radio broadcasting consistently identifies local-language radio as a critical medium for effective community health communication in plural societies. Unlike formal media channels that privilege technical discourse and expert authority, vernacular radio functions within familiar linguistic and cultural frames, enabling audiences to interpret health messages through lived experience and shared social knowledge. As Manyozo (2012, p. 89) observes, "Radio remains embedded in everyday life in ways no other medium can replicate," a quality that strengthens trust, credibility, and sustained community engagement.

Within the Nigerian context, Obijiofor (2015, p. 117) similarly argues that indigenous-language broadcasting "creates a sense of ownership over public messages," particularly among populations historically marginalised by official communication structures. Such ownership transforms listeners from passive recipients of information into active participants in meaning-making processes surrounding health and wellbeing. Complementing this position, Servaes (2008) situates vernacular radio within participatory communication theory, contending that health communication achieves greater effectiveness when it is dialogical rather than prescriptive.

However, these studies suggest that vernacular radio should not be understood merely as a channel for information dissemination, but as a communicative space in which community health meanings are negotiated and socially anchored. This dialogical capacity renders vernacular radio especially relevant for environmental health policy engagement, where behavioural change depends not only on awareness but on cultural legitimacy, collective responsibility and sustained public trust.

Cultural Preservation, Indigenous Knowledge, and Environmental Health Practices

Scholarship on cultural preservation consistently affirms that indigenous knowledge systems play a formative role in shaping environmental health practices, particularly within traditional and semi-urban communities. Such knowledge, transmitted through oral traditions, taboos and communal norms, has historically regulated waste management, water use and human interaction with the natural environment. Berkes (2012, p. 7) maintains that indigenous knowledge

constitutes "a cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief, evolving by adaptive processes," underscoring its relevance for sustainable environmental health behaviour. Similarly, Dei (2000, p. 113) notes that "local knowledge is deeply embedded in cultural values and social relations," making it difficult to separate environmental practice from cultural identity. This body of scholarship suggests that environmental health interventions that disregard cultural preservation risk undermining long-established ecological ethics that continue to inform everyday practices.

Environmental Health Policy Frameworks and Participatory Communication in Nigeria

Environmental health policy frameworks in Nigeria have historically been shaped by regulatory and institutional logics that prioritise enforcement, technical expertise and centralised decision-making, often at the expense of participatory communication. While these frameworks provide legal and administrative structure, they frequently underestimate the role of dialogue, culture and community agency in shaping environmental health behaviour. Oso (2012, p. 44) observes that public policy communication in Nigeria is largely characterised by "a one-way flow of information from government to the people," a pattern that limits public ownership and weakens compliance.

In contrast, participatory communication scholars argue that effective environmental health policy must engage communities as co-interpreters of risk and responsibility. Servaes (2008, p. 22) asserts that "sustainable social change cannot occur without the meaningful participation of those most affected," underscoring the inadequacy of top-down policy models in plural societies. Similarly, Manyozo (2012) situates participatory communication as a corrective to technocratic governance, noting that community engagement enhances trust and contextual relevance. Hence, these perspectives suggest that Nigeria's environmental health policy frameworks require a fundamental reorientation towards participatory communication approaches that integrate local voices, cultural knowledge and shared accountability into policy design and implementation.

Environmental Health Policy and the Communication Gap

Environmental health policy frameworks are largely shaped by biomedical and regulatory traditions that prioritise risk control, surveillance, and infrastructural intervention. In Nigeria, as in many postcolonial states, these frameworks are influenced by international health governance models that emphasise standardisation and compliance. While such approaches offer technical clarity, they often privilege institutional efficiency over social embeddedness. According to Gostin and Wiley (2016), environmental

health policy is typically framed around “state authority to regulate risks to population health,” a stance that contrasts with local expectations of collective responsibility. In the same vein, Lee and Smith (2010, p. 91) observe that “dominant frameworks tend to underplay communication as a policy variable, treating it as an auxiliary function rather than a constitutive element of health governance.”

A defining limitation of these frameworks lies in their reliance on top-down, technocratic communication approaches. Policy messages are frequently disseminated through formal channels using technical language that assumes shared levels of literacy and scientific understanding. Such approaches, while administratively convenient, often fail to engage communities as interpretive agents. Nutbeam (2000, p. 264) cautions that “information alone rarely produces sustained behavioural change,” particularly when communication is detached from social context. Similarly, Waisbord (2014) contends that technocratic communication models reduce citizens to passive recipients, thereby weakening trust and undermining the social legitimacy required for policy uptake.

The marginalisation of indigenous knowledge and local linguistic realities further deepens the communication gap within environmental health policy. Indigenous ecological practices, embedded in cultural memory and oral tradition are frequently dismissed as unscientific or obsolete. This epistemic exclusion not only silences local voices but also erodes culturally grounded environmental ethics. As Dei (2000, p. 113) argues, “Local knowledge is not merely alternative knowledge; it is knowledge rooted in lived historical experience.” Likewise, Berkes (2012, p. 9) maintains that “indigenous knowledge systems offer context-specific insights that are often more responsive to environmental change than externally imposed solutions.” The neglect of local languages in policy communication compounds this problem by stripping messages of cultural meaning and moral resonance. Servaes (2008, p. 22) articulates this dilemma succinctly:

When communication strategies fail to recognise the cultural and linguistic contexts of target populations, health policies risk becoming abstract directives with little relevance to everyday life. Such policies may exist on paper, but they do not exist in practice because they do not speak the language, literally or symbolically, of the people they are meant to serve.

This observation is reinforced by Airhihenbuwa (1995), who insists that culture is not a peripheral variable but the very medium through which health meanings are constructed. Collectively, these perspectives underscore the structural consequences of excluding indigenous

communication systems from environmental health policy frameworks.

The cumulative effect of these communicative shortcomings is evident in weak policy acceptance, uneven compliance, and limited sustainability. Environmental health regulations that are poorly understood or culturally alienating often provoke resistance, indifference, or selective adherence. In urban Nigerian settings, this has translated into persistent sanitation challenges despite repeated policy interventions. As Greenhalgh et al. (2017, p. 29) note, “Policies that lack cultural legitimacy struggle to achieve long-term behavioural change.” Likewise, Obijiofor (2015, p. 118) argues that “sustainable public policy requires communicative practices that foster inclusion and shared ownership.” Without addressing the communication gap, environmental health policies remain vulnerable to failure at the point of community engagement.

Vernacular Radio Broadcasting as a Cultural Institution

Vernacular radio broadcasting has long functioned as a trusted, community-embedded medium, particularly within African societies where radio remains woven into daily routines. Unlike national or commercial stations, vernacular radio derives legitimacy from proximity - linguistic, cultural, and social - to its audience. This trust is socially produced through shared identity and familiarity rather than imposed authority. According to Manyozo (2012, p. 89), “radio remains embedded in everyday life in ways no other medium can replicate,” a claim reinforced by Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2001), who describe community radio as a space where audiences recognise themselves and their concerns.

Local language plays a decisive role in how radio messages are interpreted and acted upon. Language does not merely transmit information; it frames meaning, emotion, and moral judgement. Health messages delivered in indigenous languages are more likely to align with listeners’ cognitive and cultural schemas, thereby shaping behavioural orientation. Airhihenbuwa (1995, p. 6) argues that “culture is the lens through which people interpret health and illness,” while Obijiofor (2015, p. 117) maintains that “indigenous-language broadcasting enhances comprehension by situating health advice within familiar expressions, metaphors, and communal values.”

Beyond communicative efficiency, vernacular radio functions as a carrier of cultural memory, social norms and environmental ethics. Programmes frequently incorporate folktales, proverbs and community narratives that encode expectations about cleanliness, land use and collective responsibility. Berkes (2012, p. 9) notes that cultural memory preserves “ethical relationships between humans and their environment,” while Tacchi (2012) observes that

community radio sustains shared meanings often overlooked by formal policy communication. Servaes (2008, pp. 21–22) captures this performative dimension;

Vernacular radio does more than inform; it performs culture. Through oral narration, shared listening, and participatory dialogue, it sustains collective memory and moral orientation. Messages aired in local languages draw authority from tradition and experience rather than regulation, allowing environmental and health values to circulate as lived norms rather than abstract rules. In this way, radio becomes a cultural institution, not simply a medium, anchoring contemporary health discourse within inherited systems of meaning.

This cultural performativity distinguishes vernacular radio from technocratic communication platforms and explains its enduring influence within community life.

Hence, the relevance of oral traditions further underscores vernacular radio's institutional role in shaping health-related practices. Oral cultures privilege narrative, repetition, and communal interpretation, all of which align naturally with radio broadcasting. Health messages framed as stories, songs, or proverbs are more likely to be remembered and socially reinforced. Finnegan (2012, p. 19) emphasises that oral traditions function as “repositories of practical knowledge,” while Dei (2000, p. 113) argues that such traditions remain “vital sources of environmental ethics in African societies.” When vernacular radio draws upon these oral forms, it bridges past and present, enabling environmental health practices to emerge from within cultural continuity rather than external imposition.

Cultural Preservation and Environmental Health Behaviour

Cultural values shape how communities relate to their environment and by extension, how environmental health behaviours are understood and practised. In many African societies, stewardship of land, water and communal space is embedded within moral codes transmitted across generations. Berkes (2012) links environmental care to cultural obligation, while Mbiti (1990) situates environmental responsibility within African communitarian thought, where individual behaviour is inseparable from collective wellbeing. These intersections suggest that environmental health behaviour is most durable when aligned with culturally rooted value systems.

Indigenous ecological knowledge therefore constitutes a significant but underutilised resource for environmental health practice. According to Berkes (2012, p. 7), such knowledge represents “a cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief,” developed through sustained

interaction with local ecosystems. Hence, indigenous environmental ethics function as informal regulatory systems guiding sanitation, waste disposal, and land use. Berkes (2012, pp. 13–14) further argues:

Indigenous knowledge systems are not static traditions frozen in the past; they are living frameworks through which communities interpret environmental change and negotiate health-related behaviour. When such systems are displaced by externally imposed policy models, communities often lose the moral vocabulary that once guided responsible environmental conduct. Effective environmental health practice therefore requires dialogue between scientific expertise and culturally inherited ecological wisdom.

This view aligns with Dei's (2000) assertion that indigenous knowledge is inseparable from social relations and cultural identity.

Hence, vernacular broadcasting plays a crucial role in sustaining culturally grounded health narratives and fostering community ownership of environmental health initiatives. By drawing on oral traditions, storytelling and local idioms, vernacular radio reinforces environmental ethics as shared social norms rather than imposed rules. Manyozo (2012, p. 89) notes that “radio's cultural proximity enables health messages to circulate as collective dialogue,” while Servaes (2008, p. 22) argues that “participatory communication strengthens community agency and accountability.” Also, when environmental messages resonate with indigenous moral frameworks, communities are more inclined to assume responsibility for their local environment. Thus, these insights suggest that cultural preservation, mediated through vernacular communication, enhances both behavioural commitment and the sustainability of environmental health initiatives.

Integrating Vernacular Radio into Environmental Health Policy Frameworks

Recognising vernacular radio as a policy instrument requires a conceptual shift in environmental health governance. Rather than treating radio as a supplementary publicity tool, scholars argue that it should be integrated into the architecture of policy design and implementation. Manyozo (2012) frames community radio as an institutional actor, while Servaes (2008, p. 21) contends that “policy effectiveness is inseparable from culturally grounded communication structures.” Thus, environmental policies that ignore indigenous communication systems often fail at the point of community engagement.

Hence, concrete pathways for incorporation lie in participatory policy design and decentralised dissemination strategies. Local broadcasters can be engaged at the agenda-

setting stage, translating policy priorities into culturally intelligible narratives before implementation begins. To this effect, Waisbord (2014) argues that participatory communication strengthens policy legitimacy by involving communities as co-producers of meaning rather than passive recipients. Similarly, Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2001) demonstrate that community radio partnerships enhance feedback loops, allowing policy actors to refine interventions based on local interpretation and response.

Ethical integration, however, demands respect for editorial autonomy and cultural integrity. Airhihenbuwa (1995, p. 6) warns that “culturally insensitive health communication can reproduce exclusion,” while Obijiofor (2015, p. 119) stresses the need to preserve community trust. Servaes (2008, pp. 22–23) reinforces this ethical imperative, arguing that participatory communication is a structural requirement for sustainability. He asserts that;

Participatory communication is not an optional ethical add-on to policy; it is a structural requirement for sustainability. When communities are excluded from the communicative processes through which policies are framed and conveyed, resistance and apathy are predictable outcomes. Conversely, when local voices and cultural forms are embedded within policy communication, compliance becomes a shared responsibility rather than an imposed obligation.

Therefore, cultural recognition is the moral foundation upon which environmental responsibility is built, reinforcing the ethical imperative of inclusion.

Therefore, the potential policy benefits of integrating vernacular radio are substantial. Trust is enhanced when messages are delivered through familiar voices and languages; inclusivity is strengthened when marginalised groups are addressed within their cultural frames of reference; and behavioural change becomes more likely when health directives are aligned with existing moral norms. Nutbeam (2000) notes that sustainable health behaviour, emerges from understanding rather than enforcement; while Greenhalgh et al (2017) link policy success to social legitimacy and community ownership. Thus, these insights suggest that vernacular radio offers not only communicative reach but also the cultural depth necessary for durable environmental health policy outcomes.

Challenges confronting the use of Vernacular Radio within Environmental Health Policy

A primary impediment to the effective deployment of vernacular radio within environmental health policy is the risk of political co-option and commercial influence. Many community and vernacular stations operate within fragile

economic and regulatory environments, rendering them susceptible to “media capture” by partisan actors or corporate sponsors. When environmental health narratives become entangled with political agendas, public trust, the medium’s primary asset is eroded. As McChesney (2004, p. 36) cautions, “media systems reflect the power structures within which they operate.” This is echoed by Manyozo (2012), who notes that donor-driven or politically sponsored programming can compromise editorial independence, transforming participatory communication into strategic propaganda.

Also, Nigeria’s profound linguistic plurality poses significant challenges for national policy coherence. No single vernacular station can adequately serve the diverse sub-groups within a given region, potentially leading to “linguistically bounded publics” (Obijiofor, 2015, p. 121) that complicate large-scale coordination. Furthermore, Servaes (2008) argues that participatory media must contend with structural inequalities, including disparate signal coverage and resource distribution. These factors dictate the “reach” of environmental health initiatives, often excluding the much marginalized populations that policies intend to protect.

However, the efficacy of vernacular radio is fundamentally contingent upon the professional capacity of its practitioners. Many local stations possess high cultural competence but lack specialized training in environmental health reporting, which can lead to the oversimplification or distortion of complex scientific data (Tacchi, 2012). Nutbeam (2000) stresses that inaccurate health information can actively undermine behavioral change. Waisbord (2014, pp. 154-155) reinforces the structural nature of this challenge:

The challenge is not whether local media can participate in public health communication, but whether institutional systems are willing to invest in their professional development and ethical regulation. Where such support is absent, well-intentioned cultural communication may unintentionally distort scientific knowledge, creating confusion rather than clarity. Sustainable health communication therefore requires alignment between cultural authenticity and technical accuracy.

This observation foregrounds the structural responsibilities of policy institutions rather than attributing failure solely to local broadcasters.

Balancing cultural resonance with scientific rigour remains a delicate task. While indigenous narratives enhance message acceptance, they may conflict with empirical evidence if left unmoderated. Airhihenbuwa (1995, p. 7) warns that cultural

relevance should not be conflated with cultural infallibility, noting that “culture can both promote and constrain healthy behaviour.” Consequently, the role of vernacular radio must be to facilitate a dialogue between expert knowledge and local meaning systems, ensuring that one neither subordinates the other (Greenhalgh et al., 2017).

In fact, these challenges underscore the need for caution in positioning vernacular radio as a policy instrument. While its cultural legitimacy offers significant promise, uncritical adoption may expose environmental health initiatives to politicisation, fragmentation and misinformation. As McQuail (2010) argues, media power must always be accompanied by accountability structures. Addressing these cautions requires coordinated policy frameworks that protect editorial independence, invest in broadcaster training and respect cultural expression while upholding public health standards.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, this paper argued that the persistent stagnation of environmental health outcomes in Nigeria is rooted in a "communicative dislocation" between policy institutions and the lived realities of urban populations. In rapidly expanding centers such as Port Harcourt, Lagos and Aba etc, environmental health challenges are perpetuated because policy directives fail to navigate the cultural and linguistic pathways that govern public behavior. Environmental health frameworks, regardless of their technical sophistication, remain fragile when they are communicated through socially distant and linguistically exclusive registers. When residents perceive health mandates as external impositions rather than communal responsibilities, compliance remains transactional and sustainability elusive.

Vernacular radio, therefore, represents a vital intersection of cultural preservation and policy innovation. Its rootedness in local language and communal trust allows it to mediate between formal state frameworks and the informal structures of urban life. By centering vernacular radio within environmental health governance, Nigeria can transit from an enforcement-centric model to a participatory approach that honors indigenous knowledge. Ultimately, meaningful environmental reform requires a communicative infrastructure that speaks from within the community, anchoring global health standards in local cultural meaning.

Recommendations

Institutionalise Vernacular Radio as a governance Partner: Environmental health agencies should move beyond treating radio as a publicity tool. Instead, stations should be integrated into the planning and feedback stages of policy design to ensure social embeddedness. Also, dedicated liaison units can be established to coordinate engagement between agencies and broadcasters. Regular consultative forums would allow for exchange of ideas and community feedback. Such arrangements would ensure continuity and smooth collaboration.

Prioritise Local Language Communication in Urban Environmental Campaigns: Environmental health directives in metropolitan hubs such as Lagos, Aba, Port Harcourt, and similar centres should be routinely produced in dominant local languages and Pidgin to bridge the literacy and trust gap, as well as behavioural response. Again, this requires careful mapping of linguistic patterns within urban communities to ensure appropriate language selection, and message design should reflect everyday expressions rather than formal translations that feel distant. Collaboration with local presenters can improve tone, clarity, and audience connection.

Strengthen Capacity Building for Vernacular Broadcasters: Targeted training programmes should be provided for local radio practitioners on environmental health reporting to ensure accuracy while preserving cultural relevance. It should also equip broadcasters with skills to interpret scientific information without distorting its meaning. Collaboration with public health experts and universities can provide sustained technical support. In this way, broadcasters remain culturally grounded while communicating with greater precision and responsibility.

Protect Editorial Independence through Clear Regulatory Support: Regulatory frameworks should safeguard vernacular radio from excessive political and commercial interference to sustain public trust and ethical environmental health communication. Also, independent oversight bodies should be strengthened to address breaches without political bias. Funding models must also be diversified to reduce overreliance on partisan or commercial interests. By so doing, credibility is preserved and public confidence sustained.

Embed Indigenous Knowledge in Environmental Health Messaging: Environmental health campaigns should deliberately draw on indigenous ecological knowledge, proverbs, stories, and cultural norms to reinforce community ownership and long-term sustainability of healthy practices. The elders in the community and cultural custodians can be engaged as credible voices in shaping these narratives. By so doing, practice is guided not only by instruction but by shared cultural meaning.

Author Details

Inaku K. Egere: Professor Egere is the Dean of Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt Nigeria. He is a Catholic Priest of Ogoja, and holds a Master’s Degree in Management and Corporate Social Responsibility, Master’s Degree in social communications, and Ph.D in communication sciences. He has authored many books and articles and he is also the editor of pastoral communication published by the Centre for African Culture and Communication.

Sunday Sunebari Samuel, is a Master’s Degree student of Pastoral/Communication Studies, Centre for the Study of African Culture and Communication, Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

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