Research communication:

Insights from practice

A working paper of the Research Communication Strategy Group

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Acronyms

AGFAX	Agriculture on Air
AGORA	Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture
APHRC	African Population and Health Research Center
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
ATC	Africa Talks Climate
ATC	Africa Talks Climate
AVSL	Association of Vision Science Librarians
BBC WST	British Broadcasting Cooperation World Service Trust
BOP	Bottom of the pile
CAC	CEDAW Advocacy Committee
CBA	Commonwealth Broadcasting Association
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERN	European Organisation for Nuclear Research
CIARD	Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research for Development
CIARD	Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research and Development
CommGap	Communication for Governance and Accountability Programme
CORNET	Coffee Research Network
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
DFID	Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FIA	Agricultural Research Fund (in Chile)
FIPS-Africa	Farm Input Promotions Africa
GDN	Global Development Network
GDNet	The electronic voice of Global Development Network
GIS	Geographic Information System
HINARI	Programme for Access to Health Research
ICD	Information and Communication for Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICT4D	Information and Communication Technologies for Development
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IMARK	Information Management Resource Kit
INASP	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications
InfoDev	Information for Development
ISP	Internet Service Provider
JOL	Journals Online project

KAINet	Kenya Agricultural Information Network
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MJ	Makutano Junction
MK4D	Mobilising Knowledge for Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OARE	Online Access to Research in the Environment
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PAN	Pan Asia Network
PDF	Portable document format
PERii	Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information Phase 2
R4D	Research for Development
RAIN	Regional Agricultural Information Network
RC	Research Communication
RCSG	Research Communication Strategy Group
Relay	Research Communication Programme
RIU	Research Into Use
RPC	Research Program Consortia
SAFOD	Southern Africa Federation of the Disabled
SciDev.Net	The Science and Development Network
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SjCOOP	Science Journalism Cooperation
SMS	Short Message Service
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WFSJ	World Federation of Science Journalists
WHO	World Health Organisation
WST	World Service Trust

Introduction

For research to strengthen policies and practices aimed at poverty reduction, a range of audiences need to engage with its findings at local, national and global levels. Promoting such engagement requires effective research communication.

The Research Communication Strategy Group (RCSG) is an informal information sharing and strategy group of research communication experts and directors of communication from a range of organizations and institutions who communicate research. The RCSG has close connection to DFID and its portfolio of research communication projects.

As a contribution to the enhancement of the research communication process, the RCSG was asked by the Department for International Development (DFID) to provide a coherent and structured presentation of the current results and evidence generated through the work of the group, with the aims of:

- illustrating, conceptually and practically, the scope and application of programme efforts to support research uptake;

- illustrating with examples how research communication contributes to an enabling environment for uptake in policies and practices;

- raising the profile of research communication work by providing practical examples of good practice; and

- contributing to developing a strategic dialogue to identify the gaps in support for research uptake initiatives.

This working paper is a collaborative effort by the group and shares some of their experience and insights from the developing field of research communication, a field where DFID's support and prioritisation of research communication has been widely admired by other donors. The document examines the following topics:

- Strengthening user demand;

- The role of intermediaries in research uptake;

- Monitoring and evaluation tools;

- The role of the media in research uptake;

- Implications for resourcing successful research communication;

- Engagement with the private sector; and

- The potential of information and communication technologies.

Section 1

1 The importance of research communication

Investment in development aims to make a difference to individuals living in poverty in developing countries, and to empower them to take greater control of their lives. Research can provide the knowledge to enable that change. It is carried out in the South as well as the North, is funded by many public and private agencies and ranges across a wide spectrum of troubling issues: diseases, crop failures and better crop varieties, water management, climate change and more.

For such research to make an impact on poverty reduction, it needs to be communicated and brought to the attention of both policy makers and people whose lives could be improved. Effective and innovative research communication is a vital element in ensuring that research makes a difference. Without it, a lot of research effort is wasted[1]. This publication contributes to an exciting, continuing and evolving debate about how best to put research into use.

Research communication is defined as the process of interpreting or translating complex research findings into a language, format and context that non-experts can understand. It goes way beyond the mere dissemination of research results. It involves a network of participants and beneficiaries. Researchers themselves, journalists, editors and their media, intermediaries who provide links between stakeholders: all these form an interdependent network linking their differing roles in the communication process. Donors, policy makers, governments generally, user organisations and the ultimate, individual beneficiaries are all potential users of research whose information needs have to be addressed in very different ways and within very differing contexts. They also require opportunities to articulate their own needs so that communication is driven by demand rather than from the top down.

Communicating research is unlike marketing and promoting a product or service; it is a process that transforms raw research outputs into something that addresses the expressed needs of beneficiaries. It can have a vital advocacy role: relevant and timely information can result in positive interventions by policy makers and governments.

The DFID research communication working paper accompanying the Department's 2008–13 Research Strategy[2] provides a useful framework for all those involved in ensuring research outputs are used effectively. It identifies five broad 'themes' under which its research communication programmes would be conducted:

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[1] See DFID research communication working paper
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/Consultation/ResearchStrategyWorkingPaperfinal_communications_P1.pdf

[2] http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/Research-Strategy-08.pdf

1. Research on communication

Research on communication is an activity itself, as well as being essential to the development effort. It is a relatively new discipline, with many unknowns: the role of the media; effectiveness of partnerships and processes of engagement; the potential of information and communication technologies; and the technical, social and other barriers to effective communication.

2. Supporting researchers to communicate

Researchers are familiar with communicating their research to others in their field of work through peer-reviewed literature. However, researchers need incentives to communicate more widely and need support in that broader role: skills building; the assistance of communication professionals; coalitions of trust with journalists and editors; and communities of practice linking researchers with intermediaries and policy processes.

3. Communication of research

The quality of the science may not be the only thing that influences decision making, even if a robust culture of science and evidence exists. There is a need to make existing information more accessible and to analyse and synthesize research to provide tailored information services. There is also a need for more harmonised and effective communication of research across institutions using agreed language, tools and standards.

4. Facilitation of research uptake and enabling environment

Effective research begins with clear identification of the needs of the target group. Many factors hold back the effective application of relevant research to alleviate poverty. These include technical barriers such as internet access or lack of equipment, language problems, social and cultural issues and questions of local expectations. The environment is changing constantly and rapidly, as are local political circumstances. Research communicators need to understand and be sensitive to all these factors for their work to bring about the desired outcomes.

5. Knowledge management

Many research communication programmes are experimental, and a substantial body of robust and quantitative data to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of investing in communication is steadily being built. Development outcomes need to become more visible. Monitoring and evaluation tools for research communication need to generate robust and credible data about outcomes and impact. Lessons can be learned more systematically across communication programmes.

The sections that follow draw together learning from case studies contributed by member organisations of the RCSG, providing examples of the impact and outcomes of

their work. In addition, Annex 2 provides brief overviews of the work of many of the member organisations.

The same theme may be covered in several sections, but the five perspectives do give coherence to the richness and vitality of the research communication experience. The themes are addressed under the following headings:

- Strengthening user demand;

- The role of intermediaries in research uptake;

- Monitoring and evaluation tools;

- The role of the media in research uptake;

- Implications for resourcing successful research communication;

- Engagement with the private sector; and

- The potential of information and communication technologies.

The stories told in these pages come out of much experience and experimentation. They illustrate success stories and also occasional failures, from which new lessons can be learned. Building on these successes and overcoming some of the obstacles noted will give direction to future work in this crucial field.

2 Strengthening user demand

The traditional approach to the research process (carry out research, write an academic paper and disseminate the findings) does not involve the users of research until the final stage of the research cycle. Rather than viewing users as passive recipients of information, effective research communication includes them in shaping the research process and responding throughout the research cycle. Users are ideally engaged at an early stage of the research process, not as passive and appreciative recipients of knowledge but with a role as stakeholders, with a sense of involvement and ownership of the research process.
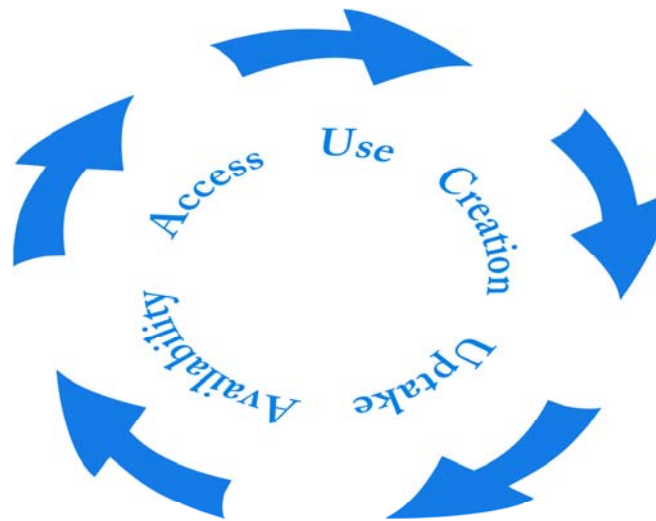
Research communication regards the involvement and response of users of research information as essential – the dissemination of research is a two-way (and usually a multi-dimensional) flow. Whilst this concept is widely agreed and understood, the various processes whereby user demand is strengthened are still evolving.

2.1 Who are the users of research?

The users of research will vary somewhat depending on the type of research and its relevance, but they encompass a wide variety of groupings.

One group of users consists of researchers who are involved in similar areas of study and research, who may well use and develop research findings further and then pass them on. This tends to be the most easily approached user group, though researchers are rarely in a position to make decisions regarding the ultimate use of research findings.

Other similar academic user audiences include research organisations and educational institutions (universities, colleges and schools), which can encourage their staff and students to engage, analyse and discuss issues around the relevance and impact of research findings.

Intermediaries (see Section 3), who may be individuals (often communication officers), groups within Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), or organisations focused on knowledge sharing, are an important user grouping that has the skills to analyse and critique the research findings, and process them for other user groups including international agencies, and national and local government. Intermediaries may play a key role in reaching policy makers (regional, national and international) when research findings are processed into policy briefings and similar outputs. Some intermediaries process research findings for use by the media (for example as press briefings, articles and information packs), and reach out to a much wider audience, which includes civil society organisations and the general public.

The provision of training opportunities such as workshops, training inputs, often backed up by documentation and online support, enables researchers to work directly with their targeted end users, such as health workers, farmers, teachers and advocacy groups.

The media, given that their potential reach is considerable, are a key user group, particularly when journalists have been sensitised and trained to analyse and translate academic papers into story lines. Researchers who are able to build effective working relationships within the media can have considerable direct impact on this user group and, through them, on the general public and end users.

2.2 Strengthening user demand for research

Presenting research findings in ways that respond to the needs of stakeholders and potential users requires real understanding of the needs of different user groups and the ability to communicate findings appropriately and accurately. This work can be carried out by specialised communication officers.

Researchers, whilst well aware of the benefits of research communication, nevertheless often experience considerable tensions. There is substantial pressure upon them to be credible within their sphere, so it can be difficult for them to make time to communicate with journalists, the wider public or to adapt findings to render them more accessible to a less academic audience. In addition, there is the concern that 'popularizing' their research findings may run the risk of damaging their objectivity.

Improving and facilitating electronic access to research information should result in positive uptake and integration by other user groups, including users involved in decision-making processes. Several of the case studies submitted (for example Annex 2: GDNet, SciDev.Net and Research for Development (R4D) portal) have focused on this approach.

The Triple Line Consulting[3] research investigated the main ways in which organisations concerned with the communication of research tried to strengthen the capacity of their users to demand and use research. They noted the following methods as of significance:

- 73% of organisations used workshops and conferences;
- 73% supported networks and coalitions that bring together research users and research generators;
- 73% used training courses and training events;
- 54% noted the use of mentoring of key individuals; and
- 43% provided specific advice to policy makers and funders to target their end users.

These are all approaches already in use by one or more of the organisations involved in this RCSG review. Case studies will show how different organisations are using innovative approaches to reach and strengthen the capacity of different user groups.

2.3 Building capacity through workshops, conferences and training events

Creating space for researchers to reflect, absorb new findings, discuss and learn may result in valuable benefits, both for individual researchers and the wider research process. Providing opportunities for critical reflection is a key part of the research cycle. New avenues of information or awareness of similar work in other countries may become apparent. Other researchers may see wider possibilities for the use of research findings than are perceived by the original researchers.

Workshops, conferences and other similar initiatives allow researchers and development practitioners to share findings with each other. They provide time and incentives for discussion and reflection on the relevance of new information. Face-to-face interaction can help in building working relationships based on trust and confidence.

Facilitating and strengthening Southern voices and perspectives – through such processes as networking, workshops and conferences – is likely to increase their entry to international academic fora and international development policy processes, whilst at the same time enhancing their role as research users. This also has the beneficial consequence of providing a wider perspective on Northern research.

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[3] Proctor, F. J., Adolph B., Atampugre, N., Carlile, L., Davies, J., van der Gaag, N., and M. Myers (2009) Learning lessons on research uptake and use: A review of DFID's research communication programmes. Part 2 – Resources. 238pp. A study undertaken for DFID by Triple Line Consulting Ltd, UK

http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/Misc_InfoComm/DFIDCommsPart2_110909_with_disclaimer.pdf

Some of the workshops mentioned in the case studies (such as ICT4D and Acacia's learning forum in Senegal) bring together researchers from North and South, whilst others, such as KAINet (Kenya Agricultural Information Network) and Pan Asia focus on South-to-South collaboration.

For example, in the Canadian initiative of IDRC, the ICT4D programme supported a two-day workshop on communicating for influence and change for network partners, who benefited from the expertise of organisations such as the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Panos and others. Sessions focused on strategic communication plan development; examining research to policy linkages; engaging with journalists and media; visualizing information; and leveraging television and video.

GDNet (see below) seeks to foster two-way communication between researchers and users of research, encouraging the development of regional networks to enhance policy outreach.

GDNet: a knowledge hub

GDNet (Global Development Net) has been operating since 2001, providing online knowledge services, with some capacity building on knowledge management. GDNet aims to support researchers in developing and transition countries to generate and share applied social science research to advance social and economic development. GDNet is committed to amplifying the voice of researchers in the South. In its mission statement GDNet describes itself as:

'a **knowledge hub** that brings together and communicates policy-relevant research from the **Global South**. It aims to be an internationally recognized focal point / knowledge broker for development research to inform policy debate. GDNet is a **partnership** with regional networks and leading experts in the field. GDNet provides access to **on-line** journals and data, synthesizes and communicates Southern research, and strengthens research **communication capacity'**. GDNet's core values are to foster **Southern ownership,** promote and strengthen a **Southern voice and empower researchers** from the Southern countries to access global knowledge and to engage in development policy debates.

www.gdnet.org/

But networking and conferences can be costly to organise. Several organisations have opted for much lower cost options to network researchers and other users such as journalists.

2.4 Building user capacity through networking initiatives

Networks do not have to be large. Initiatives involving a close circle of co-workers ('community of practice') can be important and low cost. Within large research organisations this may be inhouse. Encouraging research teams to set aside time regularly to share learning, progress, problems and feedback can prove a simple and valuable exercise, not least in building their communication skills and confidence. They do not even have to be just within one country or institution. Methods used could include face-to-face meetings, exchange visits, peer reviews, exchange of report summaries, or email, telephone or Skype conferences with peers in other countries. More formal initiatives, staff time permitting, could include an organisational intranet or an internal e-newsletter or update.

For example, the Kenya Agricultural Information Network (KAINet) initiative (see below) now enables researchers within Kenya's five key agricultural research institutions to share information, but a wider vision of the CIARD (Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research and Development) initiative within the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) is to make public-domain agricultural research information and knowledge truly accessible to all.

KAINet

KAINet brings together five leading agricultural institutions in Kenya to produce a shared open repository of the outputs of agricultural research.

Initiated in 2006, KAINet was developed in response to demand from the national and international community to promote information exchange and access among stakeholders in the agricultural sector to support decision making, promote innovation in agriculture, and improve livelihoods.

Initial activities included consultations between stakeholders in agricultural research, education, and extension to establish the basis for the network. Participatory workshops were held to raise awareness of the initiative and gain commitment at all levels.

Capacity development

Institutional planning, information management and communication training were provided to a total of 55 staff from the KAINet member institutions.

The national repository of Agricultural Science and Technology Information is now accessible through the KAINet website (www.KAINet.or.ke) and includes 1,500 full-text documents and 35,000 metadata records. In addition, three of the five centres are successfully exporting content to FAO's global public domain AGRIS database. There has been a positive change in the perceived negative attitude of the users of the information services towards library information services.

An additional benefit has been the improved visibility of scientists who have gradually come to appreciate the benefits of sharing their outputs. KAINet is seeking to provide incentives for researchers and academics to share more of their research outputs and to enhance communication activities and advocacy materials to increase awareness of the KAINet resources

At the international level, KAINet is a response from Kenya to the call to join the global movement on Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research and Development (CIARD), aimed at making public-domain agricultural research information and knowledge truly accessible to all. Following global stakeholder consultations, the CIARD initiative has generated a manifesto, a checklist of good practices and a set of validated practical pathways for managing, sharing and disseminating research outputs, which provide replicable approaches for agricultural organisations and have the potential to be adapted to other sectors.

Additionally, the Kenyan experiences in establishing KAINet are being shared with other African countries through sub-regional and regional agencies.

The networking of researchers with other user groups can also bring many benefits. (Networking researchers and the media is covered in Section 5).

Science Journalism Cooperation (SjCOOP), an initiative of The World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ), has encouraged the networking of science journalists through mentoring. Its approach has largely avoided the high costs of hosting regular workshops and conferences by using internet technologies to maintain network relationships, for example Skype for tele-conferencing.

2.5 Building the capacity of researchers to communicate

In DFID's Working paper on Research Communication[4] (2008) it was noted that support to help researchers to communicate more effectively is needed in three areas:

1. to improve incentives for researchers to communicate beyond their normal audience of other researchers;
2. to build skills at personal and institutional levels to more effectively communicate; and
3. to work with policy makers to strengthen their capacity and demand for evidence in policy and practice.

Without demand for research, there will be little absorption of its lessons and findings, however well communicated.

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[4] DFID Research Strategy 2008–2013; Working Paper Series: Research Communication (2008), R4D
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/r4d/PDF/Outputs/Consultation/ResearchStrategyWorkingPaperfinal_communications_P1.pdf

Internet connectivity has brought far-reaching changes over recent decades in the availability of, and access to, scientific research. University staff have a role in helping researchers and research students to learn to examine information systematically and strategically. Web searching, ostensibly a straightforward process, is fraught with difficulties for Southern researchers. For example, they may be using a second language to determine useful search terms or to identify alternative terms to broaden search parameters, or access to information may be limited by long download times for large documents.

"Individuals' capabilities … are limited by their capacity to construct useful knowledge, to share that knowledge with others, and to apply that knowledge in practice and in ways that may lead to further construction of knowledge through critical reflection on their practice."[5]

Librarians and information staff can help researchers to carry out critical analyses of available information. With the wealth of information accessible to researchers, the need for analysis and critical reflection becomes paramount. The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) (case study 9) developed an approach to support its mature students in developing information literacy skills – which will enable more active involvement as users of research. Such work builds researchers' capacity to conceptualise, design, plan, implement and evaluate outcomes-based communication strategy and implementation.

The R4D web portal (which shares DFID-funded research) has a Communications Corner to encourage and support researchers in communicating more effectively. In addition to a range of documents and reports, regular blogs and a podium share learning and encourage discussion.

2.6 Building links with civil society

The growth of CSOs, and in particular NGOs, has been considerable in recent decades. Some have embarked on social research programmes. Engaging CSOs as users and stakeholders in the research process offers significant potential (see for example DFID's Southern African Federation of the Disabled Research Programme[6]).

Researchers, often working through intermediaries (see Section 3), can develop effective working relationships with CSOs, incorporating CSO beneficiaries' concerns and needs into research programmes. Action research (learning by doing), which involves participants and ultimate beneficiaries in a process of investigation around a specific issue and its potential solutions, is one way to develop such relationships, particularly in the social sciences. When appropriate, researchers can incorporate

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[5] Taylor, P. and Clarke, P. (2008) *'Capacity for a Change'.* Brighton: IDS, p. 7

[6] http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/SearchResearchDatabase.asp?ProjectID=60599

beneficiary viewpoints and needs in the planning of their research programmes. Researchers can also ensure that their research outputs target CSOs as key user groups that require evidence-based reports centred around research impacts rather than general press releases or briefings.

The production of policy briefs and training materials for civil society and educational organisations is another area of considerable potential in sharing research findings with a wide range of users. The websites and portals of many research organisations, such as The Science and Development Network (SciDev.Net) and GDNet contain useful source information and briefings for civil society groups among other users.

2.7 Successful influence on policy change

Policy makers, usually the key user group for development research, are not always able or willing to set aside time to analyse or use research findings, despite close relevance to their work. Policy makers may also lack sufficient capacity to analyse and use research evidence. Detailed briefing papers, which take account of national context, are one way of supporting this user group. Policy briefs that succinctly present research findings, distil analysis and lessons and provide policy advice can be powerful tools in research communication, especially for a non-specialist readership. They are often accessible online (for example on SciDev.Net and GDNet).

GDNet's outline theory of change is that supporting better research in developing and transition countries and communicating that research within the research community and thence to policy makers will lead to better policy making in those countries. But it acknowledges that this linear, binary model is primarily a 'push' focused model. GDNet now plans to work more on the demand side with policy actors, trying to stimulate a 'research pull' and create opportunities for policy makers to engage with each other and with researchers in assessing the impact of research findings and the issues they raise.

The presentation of research findings needs to include short and accessible messages, of course backed up with in-depth evidence. Human interest stories, that highlight the relevance of research findings and the possible impact of policy change, will help decision makers to readily understand the impact and value of the research.

> **LIRNEasia's impact on policy**
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> Pan Asia Networking (PAN) is an Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) initiative of IDRC. One of its current strategic outcome areas is to support evidence-based dialogue among regulators, policy makers, researchers, civil society and the private sector, which can lead to well-informed decision making on policy issues relevant to ICT.
>
> One of the networks generating research-based evidence supported by Pan Asia is LIRNEasia, a regional information and ICT policy and regulation think tank which is

active across the Asia Pacific. One result of its research findings successfully influenced policy makers and resulted in changes in price regulations of mobile telephony. LIRNEasia researchers were able to successfully lobby the Sri Lankan government to reduce a proposed flat rate tax on SIM card purchases. Research from LIRNEasia was used to illustrate how the proposed plan to levy a flat monthly tax of LKR50 per SIM card, in addition to a 7.5% mobile levy, would affect the 'bottom of the pile' (BOP) mobile users more than others. This policy change has led to a tax structure that no longer targets BOP mobile users in a discriminatory way.

http://lirneasia.net/

The relevance of research findings and their links to policy cannot always be planned. The outcome of one of the workshops in a learning forum in Senegal for research networks, organised by Acacia under the ICT4D initiative, which looked at policy impact, observed that sometimes work and findings that relate to policy impact are planned; but sometimes they are not. Participants observed that many policy changes, resulting from research findings were opportunistic.

The potential for working with and building relationships with policy makers, so that research institutions can work on issues that policy makers consider to be of importance, is considerable, and is one of the aims of KAINet. This involvement of policy makers has also created the supportive policies and incentives that are likely to sustain the KAINet initiative.

KAINet's impact on policy decisions

The Kenyan National Strategy for Revitalizing Agriculture prioritised knowledge-sharing links between the national research system and extension and other rural service providers in Kenya, as well as international information systems. The value of KAINet is likely to impact agricultural policy decision making:

"*This KAINet partnership is creating the synergy that will foster the free flow of information from its generation, harvesting, proper storage, and sharing, to make sure the information is used to better the quality of our agriculture and the livelihoods that are derived from agriculture. This network will be a tool to enhance the quality of our policy decisions and our policy initiatives*". Hon. William Ruto, Minister of Agriculture, speaking at the official launch of KAINET in 2009.

www.KAINet.or.ke

2.8 Targeting end users

Few researchers are able to directly target their ultimate end users – the beneficiaries of development research outputs. Intermediaries (the subject of Section 3) provide various processes for doing this. But there are opportunities for individual researchers or research teams to reach out directly. Often this will depend on individuals who have a flair for straightforward communication, speaking at public events, partaking in interviews with the media or writing articles or letters that are published for wider circulation. The rapidly evolving global communication technologies provide increasing opportunities for direct and effective dissemination of research findings tailored to specific groups (see Section 9).

Mediae's popular programme Makutano Junction has a mobile phone response system for viewers, which, together with its data base, facilitates research by sponsors (donors, government, civil society) to understand their users. In addition, Mediae has phoned and sent research forms to 70,000 viewers. This gives a clear understanding of their viewers, their preferences and their information requirements. Researchers work with the team that writes and produces the programmes, ensuring that any topics covered are dealt with accurately and effectively.

CABI provides information and scientific expertise to solve problems in agriculture and the environment. It addresses issues such as food security, safeguarding the environment and control of invasive species. It also provides information and support for community-style telecentres, directly targeting end users, and runs global plant clinics to help farmers identify pests and diseases affecting their crops.

The BBC World Service Trust's research for 'Africa Talks Climate' (ATC) has been very well received. It combined the views and experiences of ordinary people with those of researchers. The importance of an evidence-base for those already working in the field became clear throughout the process. Speaking at the launch event Professor Maathai said: "It is extremely important for people to understand [climate change]. As the report indicates, [it] has often been described as an abstract, scientific subject … it is very important that we communicate in a language that our people understand." [7]

The Commonwealth Broadcasting Association (CBA) is among users of the research findings. "We used the ATC research because we felt it was a very different piece of work with a fresh approach. The connection of grassroots and policy is crucial in any media focus, and our participants found it extremely useful and easy to use", said Deputy Secretary-General of the CBA Sally-Ann Wilson[8].

2.9 Summary

The demand by users for research outputs depends on many factors such as whether:

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7 Launch of the Africa Talks Climate report in Nairobi, Kenya, on 17 March 2009

8 E-mail communications from Sally-Ann Wilson to BBC WST, June 2010

- they know the outputs exist;

- the outputs are of value to them;

- they are in a format that they feel is accessible to them; and

- their potential relevance merits the investment in time and effort required to absorb and apply them.

Building capacity for research-based evidence requires effort at individual, organisational and institutional levels through a complex mix of real and virtual partnerships, networks and support tailored to the circumstances. With user demand and capacity both strengthened, whether or not research evidence actually feeds into improved decisions, policies and practices also depends on the specific context, political pressures, individual personalities and timing.

Researchers who make the challenging decision to engage with users early in the research cycle, strategically and imaginatively, can achieve very positive results. Some of the initiatives – for example the mentoring approach of ScJOOP in training journalists, the LIRNEasia research into ICT usage and the low cost networking of journalists by ScJOOP – provide stimulating ideas for uptake and replication elsewhere.

The case studies submitted highlight some useful and replicable learning. Most organisations have stimulated demand and understanding within their user groups. There are many opportunities to extend these processes (through training materials, workshops and the media, for example) with end user groups that form the ultimate beneficiaries of research and policy initiatives, such as communities, educational and civil society organisations. Relatively simple and low-cost approaches such as exchange visits and ICT techniques offer considerable potential.

2.10 Key observations

- Understand the needs and contexts of the ultimate users of the research – through stakeholder analysis, participatory approaches, focus groups etc.

- Ensure that the questions the research seeks to investigate and answer are the questions that users want answered. Communicating findings seen as relevant and timely brings the greatest impact.

- Networking South-to-South researchers brings many benefits: facilitating learning; information sharing and reflection; sharing regional initiatives which have potential application elsewhere; and bringing possible spin-offs from specific Southern research.

- Policy makers are a key user group that will benefit from targeted succinct messages with clear policy applications, backed up with evidence and policy papers.

- Educating, stimulating and encouraging target users, outside the more 'traditional' academic users – such as civil society organizations and the media – is an area of considerable potential where work is evolving rapidly.

3 The role of intermediaries in research uptake

Knowledge intermediaries (or 'infomediaries' as some organisations define this role) play a key role in ensuring that relevant research findings reach their target, either directly or indirectly.

The traditional approach for researchers sharing their findings was to produce one or more academic papers which were then disseminated through presentations at conferences and publication in academic journals, and were subject to peer review and feedback. Impact was assessed by the number of references made to the paper by their peers. However, the work of research communication has transformed this approach. Intermediaries seek to ensure that research findings do not simply remain in academic papers but are made available to those most likely to use and benefit from the findings.

3.1 What is a knowledge intermediary?

The role of an intermediary in research communication is to support the role of researchers through the channelling and dissemination of research information. Their role is key in ensuring that key findings reach the target audiences. They enhance access to research findings through their various roles of organising, packaging, summarising, communicating and adapting information to meet the needs of different user groups. Their role is not restricted to facilitating a one-way flow of information. Potentially, intermediaries can support the research cycle at all stages, informing the way in which researchers plan and carry out their research. For example, intermediaries can help through:

- setting up two-way communication between researchers and users;
- helping to identify research needs;
- raising awareness of research;
- working with researchers to gain better understanding of their work;
- producing material aimed at different audiences to disseminate findings effectively; and
- supporting the application of findings in policy and practice.

Target audiences will differ according to the specific research, but key targets will include policy makers (regional, national and international), international agencies, national and local government, CSOs, other researchers and research organisations, educational institutions (universities, colleges and schools) and the media.

The role of information intermediary may be filled by an individual, a communication team or a whole organisation. Some development research organisations appoint a communication officer to work alongside researchers. Some researchers may prefer to communicate their work directly, particularly in the production of papers and policy recommendations.

"Intermediaries play a crucial role in ensuring information is freely accessible to the public and getting it into the digital domain. Intermediaries also organize information so it can be easily found, an extension of the traditional library role into an increasingly populated digital environment."[9]

This section looks at a variety of case studies from DFID's Research Communication partners, illustrating ways in which intermediaries influence the effective communication of development research.

3.2 The routes used by intermediaries to reach their targets

Intermediaries use a number of approaches to ensure information reaches its target. One approach is to enhance access to academic papers. Academic journals traditionally supported their work through substantial library and research organisation subscriptions. The rapid growth of web-based technologies, together with growing appreciation of research communication, is leading to major changes in the strategic management and dissemination of research.

Depositaries (or repositories) hosted by libraries, governments or organisations can provide long-term and secure storage of documents, in particular academic papers and reports. Digital depositories can store an infinite number of documents and, when well managed and structured, can facilitate global online access. Intermediaries can help here by ensuring ease of access and appropriate labelling and search facilities for articles, and circulating emails to interested parties when new material is available. This approach overlaps with that of librarians.

Like a frog in a well

After a Train the Trainers workshop run by INASP/ Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERii) in Nepal, Sudha Risal Sharma returned to her work as librarian for the Lumbini eye institute in Nepal – to 'her small well'. "However, I was not the same frog. I understood the difference in collecting and disseminating information properly. Before I could not even send an email with my limited grasp of the English language.... With the help of the Association of Vision Science Librarians (AVSL) and my networking contacts, my library was able to provide better information to our users.... Now I feel like an experienced librarian of a developed country thanks to my networks and strong searching skills."

www.inasp.info/like-a-frog-in-a-well

A second approach involves intermediaries 'packaging' information before informing or approaching target audiences. This ranges from providing an introduction to the research findings, a simple editing of the material to make it more readable, to substantial reworking of the information to provide press releases, articles, briefing

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[9] Fisher, Vogel and Gould, 2010, MKD2, IDS)

packs or specialised policy briefs. Summarising research findings in accessible ways for policy makers, such as through policy briefs, is a key role for intermediaries.

Mediae Trust regularly includes findings from research organisations and information providers, including DFID-funded research consortia, within their programmes. It has developed and fine tuned a process for taking what is quite often complicated information and turning it into compelling storylines that will be of interest to the viewer. It takes its intermediary role very seriously – balancing the views and needs of those who identify and prepare the material going into programmes with those of their audience (including what they enjoy watching and why, and what their information needs are). Mediae conducts and commissions both qualitative and quantitative surveys in order to get a better understanding of what people want to hear about and where Makutano is making a difference to people's lives.

A further approach by intermediaries is to play an active role in directly communicating information. This includes organising conferences and training workshops and training educators and journalists.

FAO is one of the collaborators in the development and dissemination of specialised learning resources through the Information Management Resource Kit (IMARK). Over 50,000 information intermediaries worldwide have used the various IMARK modules, now spanning 6 major topic areas in up to 6 languages. For example, the Agricultural Research Fund (FIA) in Chile has been able to develop the capacities of its information intermediaries throughout its national network of research using various IMARK modules in a variety of formats, including self-paced electronic learning modules, face-to-face workshops and blended approaches combining distance and face-to-face formats.

Establishing good links with the target audience is another important aspect of the role of an intermediary, particularly in building links with journalists, the rest of the media and policy makers. Intermediaries must also be able to build the capacity of user, particularly at organisational level.

Policy makers rarely have time to read lengthy academic papers and reports, but if intermediaries establish a good working relationship with them, they are more likely to know when to send relevant information in a relevant format.

Research for DFID by Triple Line Consulting[10] in 2009 into the main routes used by research organisations to target their end users found that the most significant were:

- 38% – direct communication with end users: communities, households and the poor (for example a television soap opera on HIV/Aids);

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[10] Proctor, F. *et al*, (2009), 'Learning lessons on research uptake and use: A review of DFID's research communication programmes, Part 2 Resources'. Triple Line Consulting, UK.

- 64% – indirectly to households, communities and the poor via intermediaries or practitioners, who process the information for end users; and

- 87% – indirectly through better informed decision makers and more appropriate policy processes (for example policy briefs and workshops targeting national centres of excellence and civil society groups).

Two thirds of the research communication organisations funded by DFID thus see the role of intermediaries as very significant.

3.3 Role of e-journals

Researchers and their institutions gain recognition and funding through the publishing of their work as academic papers in peer-reviewed journals. However, most research journals charge their readers, which can make it more difficult for researchers and policy makers from the South to gain access to research papers. DFID has part funded the work of INASP (International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications) in seeking to enable open access to journals, particularly in Southern countries. Journals Online (JOL) provides an interesting example of 'cascading' intermediaries, of an intermediary (INASP) supporting regional or country level intermediaries – capacity building to support the development of journal-hosting websites which enhance local ownership and greatly improve the visibility and accessibility of journal articles.

INASP's JOL project

JOL is a part of the second phase of the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERii) facilitated by INASP.

PERii focuses on the needs of developing and emerging countries by working with partners to support global research communication through knowledge exchange, network building and capacity strengthening. The core programme areas focus on:

- affordable access to international scholarly literature;

- writing, publishing and communication of research;

- effective use, evaluation and management of ICTs to support research;

- development of modern, digital research libraries; and

- enabling evidence-informed policy making.

JOL helps peer-reviewed journals from developing and emerging countries to publish research findings online, giving researchers access to local knowledge and the opportunity to contribute their own articles. The aim is to increase the visibility of research from these countries while also increasing the capacity of journal editors to improve the quality of their journals and manage them online.

"I am very pleased with PhilJOL (Philippine based JOL project); our journal and the health information contained therein are suddenly much more visible online than ever before. This availability would not have been possible or easily achievable by a

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> *developing country publication such as ours were it not for the generous support of INASP. You are levelling the playing field. Many thanks."*   PhilJOL Journal
>
> www.inasp.info/jols

Online technologies are growing in their global reach, but online access is very varied for southern researchers and intermediaries. Email based dissemination may have wider usage, particularly in areas where web access is either disjointed, subject to restrictions or expensive.

3.4 The role of web portals

Well designed portals and websites facilitate the direct access to online research findings for researchers, NGO staff, policy makers and other target audiences. The importance of their role in sharing information is ongoing and increasing. Web-based portals provide 'gateways' to enable users to search effectively for information from other websites within defined and structured search frameworks. Their establishment demands skill, planning and constant updating. Digital information overload is common, and portals that facilitate selectivity and establish search terms that enable users to find what they nee, will ensure regular visits by users.

A number of the DFID-supported organisations provide such portals. This includes portals by GDNet, SciDev.Net, BRIDGE and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). Case studies show examples of different approaches.

> ## R4D
>
> The development of the R4D portal provides a useful example of the rapid changes in information research depositories. Established as a platform/forum in 2006 for sharing DFID-funded research work, the interactive portal includes a free, open access, searchable database of current and previous research. It aims to support the development of a more transparent relationship between research teams, key stakeholders and the general public. Its database contains around 5,000 projects, 26,000 research outputs and 17,000 PDFs on topic areas including growth, climate change, governance in challenging environments and agriculture. In addition to the database, the website also provides the contact details of over 4,000 research organisations with which DFID research teams have worked.
>
> It now has 30 themed email alerts on specialist subjects such as agriculture and water and over 45 country specific e-alerts. Such alerts and links enable stakeholders to create their own tailored alerts and feeds. The portal also functions as a forum for e-consultations to enable exchange between researchers and other stakeholders involved in DFID-funded research.
>
> R4D is currently reaching a large audience, with over 80,000 website visits per month in 2010. In 2009, an independent review of the site revealed that 90% of survey respondents rated the R4D service as useful, with 54% reporting that they felt it was

very or extremely useful. Particularly positive feedback was received from users in developing countries. www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/

Forum for e-consultations www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/communicationsCorner.asp

The BRIDGE website is a specialised gender and development intermediary established by IDS, to support gender advocacy and mainstreaming efforts. It provides accessible and diverse gender information in print and online formats. It is an example of a single-focus website portal.

Supporting programme design in Nigeria

Gloria Momoh works for the Association for Reproductive and Family Health in South West Nigeria, an NGO which provides information and services relating to reproductive health and rights. Gloria takes part in training and provides technical assistance and mentoring.

Gloria stumbled across the BRIDGE website in 2008. At that time Gloria's NGO was working on a proposal. Thanks to BRIDGE she was able to draw on experiences from other countries and much of what she learned was included in the concept paper and the proposal. The concept note has been accepted and Gloria is confident that the NGO will get the funds to implement the project.

"*BRIDGE has really helped because I can get feedback on some of the things in my mind and see that they're achievable – I see that it works in Tanzania and Uganda. BRIDGE has improved my knowledge and changed my attitude.*"

www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/

3.5 Assessing the impact of intermediaries

Whilst information portals can provide statistical evidence of usage, clear evidence of actual uptake and impact of information is much harder to find. Measuring visits to sites and downloads of particular papers and documents does not necessarily provide any evidence of actual usage or, in particular, evidence of whether information is reaching its targets. SciDev.Net has requested user comments and feedback to provide anecdotal evidence.

SciDev.Net examples of user feedback

A freelance journalist from Argentina writes that *SciDev.Net "has helped me to write stories telling people why science can be helpful to improve societies"*. She adds that, "*in such a way, SciDev.Net material helps me to have a broad view not only of what is going on in my country, but also in other nations of the world.*"

A retired researcher in Costa Rica who works for a biodiversity-related NGO says that he *"acquires good knowledge related to biodiversity (seeds, biotechnology, farmers'*

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work, biodiversity public policies), and science". He adds that, "*the knowledge acquired completes my vision related to the application of science to development, which I afterwards transmit to grassroots groups"*.

A television producer from Zanzibar who makes programmes on environmental issues such as climate change says that he uses information from SciDev.Net "*to equip myself with knowledge and learn about recent research findings. This helps me to inform our audience better. I feel more empowered with knowledge on science-related issues, and have a place to find information that I want. This is an important site."*

A college dean in Ethiopia says that the website has allowed him to be aware of new science-based achievements and collaborations in Africa, commenting that "*I think this site has made tremendous efforts in promoting science in Africa."*

A solar energy engineer in Tanzania who is engaged in the planning and development of renewable energy projects says that SciDev.Net has been a resource of information on how to carry out climate mitigation activities. "*The information gathered from SciDev.Net has equipped me and my fellows with new tools in implementing climate mitigation activities."*

 www.scidev.net/

3.6 The impact of intermediaries on policy and decision makers

Effective research communication means that research findings are more likely to be taken up by policy makers and practitioners. E-journals and web portals ensure that findings and current thinking are clear and freely available. Statistical data for user access is readily available, but establishing links between access and uptake, and ultimately policy change, is difficult. The logical results chain of improved availability of research outputs leading to access and uptake, in turn impacting on better decision-making, depends heavily on assumptions. And the further along the chain, the greater the number of assumptions and the harder it is to show attribution. Intermediaries certainly help 'oil the chain' but clear evidence of intermediary action leading to policy changes is not always easy to provide.

However, the political context in which intermediaries operate varies greatly, and this influences their ability to impact on policy-making processes. Among some of the more common characteristics of policy processes in developing countries that Court and Cotterrell[11] identify are:

- less representation and weaker structures;

- remote and inaccessible policy-making processes;

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[11] Court, J with Cotterrell, L. (2006) "What Political and Institutional Context Issues Matter for Bridging Research and Policy? A literature review and discussion of data collection approaches", ODI working paper, 269, June 2006, p3-5

- limited processes for participation;

- greater competition owing to resource scarcity;

- information, critical in the decision-making process, is generally in short supply and is often unreliable;

- policy elites play much more decisive roles in policy making; and

- donor influence.

In democratic countries with more open political systems, policy-making processes are generally more likely to be influenced by available evidence and information.[12]

Demonstrating the impact of specific research findings on policy changes is difficult, given that numerous information inputs may influence decision making (in addition to current social, economic and political factors). However SciDev.Net offers anecdotal examples of how material from its website is used.

"We can demonstrate our contribution to important debates on science-related issues, even though we cannot demonstrate that the outcomes of such debates can be attributed to information provided by us alone," says David Dickson, Director. For example, an environmental health officer from Southern Sudan writes that "since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan, and the formation of the government of southern Sudan, there have been no policies, law and regulation. So SciDev.Net has helped me with ideas of how to carry on with matters related to health, environment and energy. In my Ministry of Housing, Physical Planning and Environment, we have been able to develop an environmental policy in Southern Sudan. I really appreciate SciDev.Net for the knowledge that I have gained through reading their articles."

A conference held in Pretoria by IDS in 2008 as part of the second phase of its Mobilizing Knowledge for Development (MKD2) programme focused on the power of intermediaries in supporting evidence-based pro-poor policy and practice. The conference recognised that policy – its formulation and implementation – is a key driver for action to address the many issues surrounding poverty and injustice. Policy makers, civil society organisations, development practitioners and researchers are well-known actor groups supporting evidence-based pro-poor policy and practice. Less well known are the intermediaries that act 'in between' these groups of development actors.

MKD2 Key learning from 'Locating the Power of In-between' conference

Policy is not the only driver or action for change. The research-policy link is just one example from a complex web of ways in which research can help contribute to pro-poor outcomes. More work is needed in strengthening the capabilities of all involved in the research, policy

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[12] Court, J with Cotterrell, L. (2006) *op cit*

and practice connections, looking not only at strengthening the communication skills of researchers but also the capabilities of research users to engage effectively with research.

There are many areas in which intermediary actors have the potential to address barriers to evidence-based policy. In their focus on brokering information and facilitating information flow processes within and between actors, the work of intermediaries can complement the work undertaken by other actors. They can add value to researcher communication and also support research users to engage with material. Through their oversight they can also help to set agendas in research, policy and practice arenas. The potential for these roles is far from being fulfilled.

http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/strategic-learning-initiative/publications

3.7 Key observations

These case studies highlight the growing role of intermediaries in facilitating the dissemination of development research findings against a background of digital information overload. Their role ensures that research findings are not published and quickly forgotten, particularly by the policy makers at whom the original research was targeted.

- Intermediaries require the skills to understand complex research findings, to assess their significance against existing knowledge and to 'package' the findings in order to reach the appropriate targets.

- Intermediaries are key in providing 'packaged' information which helps bridge the 'gaps' in terms of understanding and knowledge among users (such as media, CSOs and policy makers).

- Intermediary organisations not only 'process' new research findings but also enable users to assess their value alongside existing knowledge through the provision of easily accessible digital databases and repositories.

- The role of intermediaries is not simply a one-way dissemination of research outputs; intermediaries also facilitate a two-way dialogue between the various actors and support the whole research cycle.

- Web portals which provide RSS feeds and email updates, enable users to receive regular updates based on their specific interests.

- Information intermediaries with the skills to produce relevant and timely policy briefings can prove key in targeting policy makers and informing policy and practice processes,

- Successful knowledge intermediaries provide a trusted, increasingly well used and accurate source of research information for their users, whether journalists, CSOs, government departments or end users.

4 Monitoring and evaluation tools

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are essential for showing that investment in programmes, initiatives and interventions achieves the desired outcome of contributing to the reduction of poverty. Without them, it is impossible to demonstrate value for the money deployed. To this end, DFID requires all its funded programmes to follow the Department's M&E requirements and has provided extensive guidance[13].

4.1 M&E: definition and guidance

Good M&E helps to improve the performance of programmes through a sharper focus on delivering outcomes and making greater impact. An effective M&E framework includes three elements:

1. *Monitoring*, a continuous internal process to check on the progress of development interventions against pre-defined objectives and plans;

2. *Evaluation*, normally when a project or programme has finished, evaluation seeks to answer specific questions about the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the programme's outcomes; and

3. *Reviews* at key intervals in the lifetime of a programme to check that the overall direction is the right one, and that the activities are likely to meet the purpose for which they were planned. Reviews can be internal or external.

Issues which can have a critical effect on how well M&E systems function are:

- Lack of clarity about strategic and operational objectives of the programme, making monitoring and evaluation of progress difficult, if not impossible.

- M&E is not built in at an early enough stage to allow ownership by key stakeholders, methods and indicators to be developed, baselines to be established and systems for reporting data to be built in.

- Different roles of performance monitoring for accountability and management, performance improvement, lesson learning and evaluation are not clearly identified or understood.

To guard against these pitfalls DFID recommends:

- identifying clear purpose and outcome statements for the programme that are presented in a logical framework at the outset of the programme;

- thinking about how outcomes will be monitored right from the inception phase and developing a plan for M&E during the first year of the programme;

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[13] http://www.dfid.gov.uk/research/guidance.asp

- identifying clear monitoring responsibilities within programme teams;

- protecting resources (staff time and programme budget) for data collection and monitoring activities; and

- setting up monitoring systems early in the programme and collecting baseline data, where appropriate.

The main monitoring tools recommended by DFID are logical frameworks (logframes), quarterly or six monthly financial reports and annual reports. The logframe is an important management tool, setting out the logical flow from funded activities through to programme impact (see DFID guidelines, as referred to above).

A helpful and jargon-free introduction to the importance of M&E in the communication sector, its techniques, benefits and pitfalls is given in a recent report by the Center For International Media Assistance.[14]

4.2 Challenges for monitoring and evaluation of research

A 2008 DFID workshop[15] and a position paper by Hovland, Young, Mendizabel and Knezovich[16] reviewed the effectiveness of DFID's policy and guidelines on M&E for the wider research programmes supported by DFID. Ongoing monitoring of communication strategies by DFID staff had revealed a general weakness in M&E systems across most of the research programmes. In part, this may be because DFID's expectations were formerly not as explicit, and so M&E indicators were not as rigorously determined and tracked in programmes and projects that commenced some years ago. DFID monitoring also showed wide diversity in the approaches taken to building communication capacities across global teams of researchers and communication officers. The 2008 workshop conclusions included:

Learning and monitoring and evaluation seemed to be some of the largest and most persistent challenges within the field of research communication. These are systematic problems in part generated by the time constraints of limited project- and funding-cycles. Influence and change often take a very long time.

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[14] Andy Mosher (2009) Good, But How Good? Monitoring and Evaluation of Media Assistance Projects http://cima.ned.org/reports/monitoring-and-evaluation-report.html

[15] www.dfid.gov.uk/R4Dhttp:/// Learned in Research Communication: DFID's 10% Policy on Communicating Research – Successes, Challenges and Next Steps

[16]http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/Communication/Review_of_DFID_ResearchTenPercent_policy_research_communication_June09.pdf

> Overall the research programme consortia do not seem to be inspired by DFID guidelines on M&E in the same way that they have (mostly) taken up the DFID communication guidelines. This may be because the current DFID guidelines on M&E only focus on logframes (due to reporting requirements).

A contemporaneous review carried out by Triple Line Consulting (the Triple Line Report[17]) focused more specifically on research communication in the 17 programmes in the DFID portfolio. The results mirror and complement those of the Research Program Consortia (RPC) study:

- All programmes had at least one mechanism to enable them to capture information about who their users are.

- Most programmes use a number of different processes to validate information against their logframe indicators (although not all programmes use logframes), the most popular being user surveys, external reviews, and peer and internal reviews.

- Eleven out of seventeen programmes had significantly changed their overall strategy over the last five years, the most significant trigger for this change having been 'in-house learning and reflection', followed by 'monitoring results' and 'user feedback'.

- All except the most recent of the research communication programmes have undergone at least one strategic review or independent evaluation during its lifetime.

- 53% of the 17 research communication programmes had articulated M&E strategies, with another 18% judging themselves as having done so 'somewhat'. 14 of the 17 organizations monitored against logframe indicators.

- Donors generally monitor ongoing research and research communication projects, but none appear to assess comprehensively the effectiveness and relevance of various research communication approaches, or to feed this back into their policy and investment decisions.

Most significantly, there was a great deal of concern and uncertainty about M&E tools and how to track and prove the impact of communication on uptake of research, with six out of seventeen programmes saying they would value help with their M&E efforts. Several mentioned the need for support from DFID in this regard.

"We are deeply concerned about the issue of proving attribution – how to prove whether our communication intervention has directly resulted in a policy change. WRENmedia would like to see more support from DFID on the topic of monitoring and evaluation." WRENmedia

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[17] Proctor F J et al (2009) Learning Lessons on Research Uptake and Use: A review of DFID'S research communication programmes. Part 1 – Report
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/PDF/Outputs/Misc_InfoComm/DFIDCommsPart1finalreport120609.pdf

4.3 Feedback from RCSG members: different approaches

Most of the 17 DFID-supported organisations participating in the RCSG and contacted by INASP for this study provided feedback and, in many cases, case studies. It is clear that all participants subscribe to the need for M&E of their research communication programmes, but in different ways.

Projects range widely in content, size, approach and organisation, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to monitoring and evaluating them. Some bodies have adopted rigorous, theoretically based methodologies such as logframes, but these do not necessarily work satisfactorily in all circumstances. RCSG members have also developed more experimental, sometimes less formal and more narrative approaches without losing the need for rigour in evaluation.

The case studies referred to below are drawn from the recent RCSG survey, complemented by further examples drawn from the Triple Line Report[18].

World Bank's CommGAP programme: Logic Models

The World Bank's Communication for Governance and Accountability Programme (CommGAP) is a five-year £5 million multi-donor initiative to address the challenges inherent in the political economy of development. It has three prongs:

1. research and advocacy;
2. capacity building and training; and
3. support in development projects and programmes.

Each operation under these three headings is evaluated within a rigorous framework against the four objectives that CommGAP has set itself:

1. Support legal and regulatory reforms to improve access to information.
2. Strengthen government communication capacity nationally and locally, including accountability institutions: audit, parliament, ombudsman, among others.
3. Build civic competence and demand for accountability (for example budget information and expenditure tracking.
4. Strengthen media systems (for example liberalisation, licensing regime, ownership, advertising).

The Logic Model underlying the evaluation process requires articulation of communication challenges and specific communication objectives to support the main

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[18] Proctor F J (2009) op.cit.

CommGAP objectives. It outlines the communication intervention and assesses the outcomes: the changes that the communication produced. For this to be effective, there must be measurable indicators, which may be quantitative (derived from baseline and subsequent population-based surveys, surveys with enterprises, expert polls or legislative records) or more qualitative (observation, newspaper reports or from) (see CommGAP's *Evaluation Framework for Governance Programs* [19]).

CommGAP believes that the greatest limitation to its evaluation of communication interventions is attribution, i.e. the difficulty of isolating the effects of a communication initiative from other factors contributing to the desired change. Another is the difficulty in defining how to measure key concepts that have great conceptual power but do not translate easily into quantifiable indicators (for example civil competence). In some cases, the communication intervention will involve partner organisations that work toward similar goals. It can be very difficult to try to tease out what part of any change is attributable to the Bank intervention versus that of others.

WFSJ: Outcome Mapping and logframes

WFSJ uses Outcome Mapping in its SjCOOP project, a mentoring programme for science journalists throughout Africa and the Arab World, including the mentoring of nascent associations of science journalists and involving 15 mentors and 60 mentees. The process is labour intensive – the time needed is described as 'far from being negligible' – yet the project team feels that the methodology proved particularly suitable for tracking progress in this innovative training project. (IDRC, in its ICT4D programmes also uses Outcome Mapping as a key tool in monitoring and evaluation.)

Lessons were learned in SjCOOP about the time required to design and implement the methodology and about the complexity of forms and questionnaires; the approach captured the progress of project participants; and problems and deficiencies were identified and corrected. The approach thus provided the 'spine that kept the project on track', proving itself a key element in its success. In a second phase, SjCOOP also plans to use the logframe methodology as a complementary M&E technique.

"SjCOOP benefited immensely from the Outcome Mapping monitoring and evaluation: SjCOOP was able to capture the progress of the mentees, the mentors, the coordinators and the project staff and, to some extent, the changes in behaviour of some editors and scientists. At the same time, the monitoring highlighted where there were deficiencies and problems at an early stage such that corrective measures could be developed as the project unfolded."

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[19] http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D//PDF/Outputs/CommGAP/MDTFEvaluationFrameworkFINALC.pdf

IDS: Impact Pathways and Strategic Learning Initiative

The IDS initiative MK4Ddeployed the Impact Pathways approach partly in response to a frustration with logframes that had previously been used to guide the evaluation of IDS Knowledge Services. "Collection of qualitative evaluation data was left without an analytical framework and thus we had a myriad of stories, quotes and case studies but no way to bring them together to identify patterns and learn from them."[20] The approach is therefore less a recipe for doing things than a generic basis for planning and subsequent evaluation.

Phase 2 of MK4D, managed by IDS's Impact and Learning Team, builds on the experience of Phase 1, where its Strategic Learning Initiative underpinned the M&E approach of placing examples of where change is happening ('stories'), within a 'theory of change', which sketches out how activities such as making research knowledge more accessible lead to better development outcomes.[21]

"IDS Knowledge Services are intervening in a complex environment involving multiple social and knowledge processes. Our theory of change on its own is not a complete picture. Even if we produce all the planned outputs, change only happens if a number of other external conditions (political, social, cultural, bureaucratic, personal etc.) are in place which influence whether information is used and the outcomes that result."

A more specific piece of work co-authored by IDS was an evaluation exercise for an information literacy course at IDS for mature students from a variety of countries from the UK to Ethiopia. The objective was to measure the impact of this course on the development of candidates' information literacy via the administration of a series of diagnostic questionnaires about information searching skills before and after the course[22]. The questionnaires were designed for this particular initiative but the approach is adaptable.

As with many such exercises, in retrospect the tests can seem too complex and/or time consuming, and the results are sometimes ambiguous, perhaps because conceptual framework was weak or the objectives not clear enough. These responses can only serve to improve future uses of such an approach. Such detailed tests allowed participants and tutors to monitor significant if variable improvements in information literacy, and gave pointers to further personal development.

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[20] Anna Downie (2008) From Access to Action: Impact Pathways for the IDS Knowledge Services'
http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/about-us/evaluation

[21] Mobilizing Knowledge for Development (MK4D): Sharing What We've Learned. See
http://www.ids.ac.uk/index.cfm?objectid=A5FDF5A6-A617-E515-5D400344FE9A513B

[22] M Hepworth and J Brittain (2009) A method for the design, delivery and evaluation of an information literacy intervention for development workers studying participation, power and social change http://www.ifla.org/files/hq/papers/ifla75/94-hepworth-en.pdf

WRENmedia: logframes

WRENmedia communicates research for agricultural development through two principal media – the online journal *New Agriculturist* and its pre-packaged radio service AGFAX – as well as training initiatives. It seeks to respond to demand in its communication initiatives, improve access to information and build capacity of researchers, policy makers and journalists to better communicate research and development issues. M&E is integrated into its programmes to ensure responsive and effective delivery to its target audiences.

"Pastoralism is not well understood by many who report on it. Journalists need ample time to understand issues, because if they don't then you get wrong media coverage that can be disastrous. I have always seen the media people as a team who like to harass you with many questions. But this trip made me feel like they try to do this for the right reason." John Kamanga, SORALO (South Rift Association of Land Owners), speaking of a 2009 training exercise in which livestock experts briefed trainee journalists

The tools used by WRENmedia are driven by a logframe approach. For *New Agriculturist,* the measurement techniques used were online and telephone surveys, compilation of web statistics, editorial analysis of geographical balance and breadth of the issues covered, and tracking of the routes readers used find the desired research article. Similarly for AGFAX, paper and online feedback forms, telephone surveys, editorial logs and discussion groups combined to give the feedback necessary for evaluation.

Less formal and more experimental approaches

Other research communication participants do not always explicitly adopt similarly structured approaches but do take care to track the impact of their initiatives and projects. As noted by Triple Line, most programmes were very open, saying they felt their own M&E methods were 'ad-hoc', 'unsystematic', that they 'lacked the capacity and funds to measure the impact of [their] work' or that they often had to 'rely on anecdotal evidence'.[23]

User surveys, in particular, are an important way of establishing baseline data and then measuring the impact of communication initiatives against them. They help assess users' information needs, the usability of the services provided and their relevance to the desired outcomes.

Makutano Junction is one of several edutainment initiatives run by the Mediae Company and Mediae Trust.[24] Mediae harnesses the enormous growth and popularity

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[23] Proctor F J (2009) op.cit.

[24] http://www.mediae.org/makutano_junction_research

in Africa of television, radio, mobile phones, print and other mass media to empower millions of people – supplying vital knowledge and information in forms that can be widely accessed and understood.

Makutano Junction itself, a weekly drama series set in a peri-urban East African town, has audiences of over 6.5 million. It uses SMS (short message services or text messaging) for viewers to contact it, since mobile phones are vastly more available (77% penetration currently in Kenya) than internet access. In this way the programme can use demographic data on its viewers and their opinions on its productions to feed straight back into future programme development. In turn these can be used to inform prospective sponsors of audience interest.

SciDev.Net similarly carried out a large-scale survey in August 2009, linking 28,500 registrants to a user survey and receiving 1420 responses at close. Its specific objectives were to:

- better understand who its users were and why and how they used the site;

- develop its relationship with users and respond to their needs; and

- gather information on the impact of SciDev.Net's work.

The survey focused on content, and audience reach and impact.

Positive general feedback from respondents suggested that they see the website and its content as being reliable, accessible and useful. SciDev.Net staff will review the results of the 2009 survey closely, and draw on its conclusions in planning the further development of the website, thus helping to ensure that this responds to user needs and demands.

"When we were reviewing our National Policy on Science and Technology I was referring to SciDev.Net as a reliable source of information regarding the role of S&T in national development." Policy maker, Sub-Saharan Africa

"It has helped me most directly in that I have shared the information with those in India, China and Europe. Also I have made about 100 others aware of the website." Consultant, North America

More recently, in February 2010, SciDev.Net launched a 'Tell us your story' campaign in Sri Lanka to find out more about how SciDev.Net information is used and what impact it has had on key areas of development. In response, SciDev.Net received over 120 stories from users all over the world. One example where it has made a difference was given by Dr Sarath Abayawardana, the Director Sri Lanka's National Science Foundation: "SciDev.Net enables me to be up-to-date with global developments - [it] gets my brain ticking on new innovative approaches!"

In particular, Dr Abayawardana says SciDev.Net has helped the Foundation develop a mission-oriented research programme on food security for Sri Lanka. Rural farmers with

small-holdings, the marginalised urban poor, particularly disadvantaged areas, and those affected by the prolonged civil conflict will all benefit.

The BBC World Service Trust is using audits to analyse the current understanding of information and communication for development (ICD), to provide a base case for further impact assessment; to review existing policy and investment in ICD among donor organisations; and an annual policy review (a literature review and further stakeholder audit) to assess progress towards the identified purpose of the project. It has commissioned an independent baseline survey of 25 influential policymakers, people in bilateral aid organisations and NGOs, which will be repeated at the end of the project.

The Trust not only conducts media assistance projects around the world but also boasts what many consider to be the gold standard for in-house M&E exercises. It "tends to put 12% of a project's cost toward monitoring," according to Gerry Power, the trust's director of research and knowledge management (quoted by Mosher[25]).

GDNet, the communication hub that brings together and communicates policy-relevant research from the Global South, uses both internal and external evaluations of its organisational processes and impacts. Multiple methods include desk reviews, contextual visits of partner and GDN-run workshops, interviews, online surveys of end users or stakeholders, and external reviews of GDN activity.

Panos Relay looked in four case studies (two each in Jamaica and Uganda) at how the media engage with research to influence policy outcomes. These have tracked how particular pieces of research were taken up by the media and directly or indirectly led to changed policy outcomes[26].

4.4 Key observations

The survey of RCSG members, taken together with the earlier reviews referred to in this study illustrate some of the ways in which research communication is shown to produce effective outcomes. It also emphasises that there is more work to be done. There are a range of positive messages coming from this work:

- Project leaders are conscious of the need for internal and external feedback on achievements and use those methods best suited to their particular project.

- Formal methodological tools such as logframes are used widely and are beneficial particularly for complex projects, in that they help project design, clarify purpose and expected outcomes, and facilitate evaluation.

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[25] Mosher (2009) *op. cit.*

[26] How the Media Engages with Research to Influence Policy Outcomes, to be published 2010

- The logframe approach does not suit all research communication programmes. There is room for experimentation, and RCSG members have successfully used a variety of M&E tools that are less formal but no less rigorous in their aim to demonstrate value for money.

- Many programmes chart not only success stories but also take care to capture weakness and deficiencies and learn from them to keep projects on track and improve future project design.

- It is important to research baseline data so that outcomes can be calibrated against the starting point of the intervention.

- To be fully effective, monitoring and evaluation should be integrated into research communication programmes from their beginning.

There are issues for future consideration and work, including:

- There is continued concern and uncertainty about some of the M&E tools and their application, as identified in earlier reviews. This calls for further explanation, training and support, with a particular role for DFID.

- The problem of attributing a particular outcome to a specific intervention, except in the simplest of cases, is a real one. Environmental contexts are usually complex and running experiments with control groups is normally not possible.

- It is difficult to demonstrate the effectiveness of communication programmes in their entirety, as many projects are experimental and impact data aggregated over many projects or programmes are not yet available.

4.5 References to further information

A Guide for DFID-contracted Research Programmes, DFID Central Research Department, May 2006, available from www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D

Monitoring and Evaluation of Research Communication, Catherine Butcher and Gil Yaron, August 2006, available from www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D

Building a Research Culture, INASP www.inasp.info/building-a-research-culture

GDNet http://www.gdnet.org/cms.php?id=2007_external_evaluation

Panos Relay (2010) How the Media Engages with Research to Influence Policy Outcomes, to be published http://Panos.org.uk/

Mary Myers (2005) Monitoring and Evaluating Information and Communication for Development (ICD) Programmes: Guidelines http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/icd-guidelines.pdf

5 The role of the media in research uptake

Working effectively with the media can bring considerable and far-reaching benefits for researchers wanting to communicate their findings. However, it is also an aspect of communication that benefits from careful understanding and long-term inputs to ensure a number of potential pitfalls are avoided. These involve awareness raising, sensitising and capacity building, both on the part of researchers on the one hand and journalists on the other, to ensure that media coverage of research findings is accurate and reaches its target audience and, ultimately, influences governance.

James Deane, Head of Policy at the BBC World Service Trust, comments that "Few governance experts consider the role of media in country level governance to be anything other than very important. Media may irritate, anger or frustrate those working in development, but whether for good or bad, the role of media is widely considered to be an important factor shaping the character of governance. Research has shown that media can constitute the most powerful accountability mechanism of all democratic institutions. It has also shown that when co-opted by political, commercial, extreme or factional forces in society, media can constitute one of the most powerful tools of political control and most effective means to foster violence and societal tension."[27]

The capacity of the media to influence research communication and generate public debate around research and evidence is influenced by the political and institutional context – whether the government is representative or not, and whether civil society is active or not. Media freedom is always subject to the current political context.

5.1 Background

The 2008 ODI review[28] of the DFID-funded research programme consortia, which analysed the communication outputs of 29 organisations, noted that all had received some coverage in the media, through only two thirds of them produced press releases. A third targeted the popular media and just a few produced media packs for press conferences and similar events. These findings reveal that there is still considerable potential for developing better communication strategies, and in particular for ensuring that whatever media coverage is received is based on well written and accurate press releases or media packs.

Different media channels target a wide variety of audiences, in particular the general public. The 'traditional media' such as print, radio and television tend to focus more on politicians and sensational news stories, rather than the more demanding and specialist

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[27] The Role of the Media in Good Governance: confronting the engagement gap', a working paper prepared for DFID by the BBC World Service Trust in June 2009

[28] Hovland, I. et al (2008), op cit

area of sharing development research. However, the work of WRENmedia, Panos's Relay programme, ScJOOP and Mediae Trust in particular all show the considerable potential that exists in harnessing traditional media. This is often through the work of intermediaries in sensitising journalists, building their capacity, providing training opportunities and in facilitating researchers to produce newsworthy press releases to share their findings, which target relevant journalists.

For the purpose of this section, the definition of media incorporates radio, television, print and the rapidly developing sector of podcasts and online services. Developing social media, including SMS, social networking and other ICTs are covered in Section 8.

In the South, radio, particularly local radio, still has the greatest coverage. Radio is generally accessible even to the poorest in society, particularly in Africa where many people may lack resources to allow access to television or newspapers. Overlapping radio networks include national, international, local, community, and religious services. But they also incorporate online podcasts – and all provide opportunities for research communication. Radio broadcasting is relatively low cost to produce and facilitates the translation of programmes into local language broadcasts. It can readily facilitate a two-way exchange of information, given that presenters may select a variety of people (which could well include researchers) to interview to gain immediate response and feedback on current issues. Newsprint, whether national or local, has a smaller reach than radio, but is generally the easiest of the media options for researchers to engage with, and is often an initial source of content for radio and television. Television is more difficult for researchers and communication officers to engage with because in-depth programming is planned long in advance, though when contact – generally initiated by producers – is fruitful, the benefits and impact can be considerable.

Relay (Panos) has found that the following factors strengthen the capacity of the media:

- the capacity of journalists to use research to create stories that capture the public mood and that are related to existing and emerging policy-making agendas;

- the capacity of researchers to produce policy-relevant research and to work with intermediaries to present it in a way that the media can use;

- the capacity of civil society activists to pick up policy-related research and drive public debate around it; and

- the strength of the relationships among these actors – and the degree of openness and trust among them.

5.2 Building the capacity of journalists

Journalists can play a key role in an effective research communication strategy. By informing and stimulating public debate, they often contribute to the pressure that results in policy change and good governance.

Journalists, whatever their medium, work under continual pressure to come up with copy and good storylines. Career development depends largely on their ability to develop a distinct angle and provide a consistent flow of good copy. Their work is usually done under time constraints: they need a good story for tomorrow or the following week. Journalists may regard researchers as difficult to approach, carrying out work that is irrelevant and largely inaccessible to their audiences. Few will have the inclination or opportunity to seek out and consider using research findings, unless research organisations or intermediaries first initiate links and contacts to help editors and journalists see the potential of covering their topics, backing this up by developing relationships and linkages and then ensuring a flow of good source materials. Without editorial support in the covering of development issues, journalist copy will rarely be used.

> *"Traditionally the use of the media has been about communicating research messages when there are success stories in particular. But journalists have the potential to be more of an agent of change themselves. They are in quite a unique position, potentially being the voice of policymakers, the voice of farmers, the voice of researchers. So I think they potentially can be quite a powerful catalyst for change".*
>
> Kerry Albright, DFID, (from New Agriculturist, November 2009)

During 2008/09, many Southern contributors to WRENmedia's monthly information packs for radio – AGFAX – have attended DFID-funded regional training workshops on better science reporting, helping them to build partnerships with African researchers and improve their reporting skills in different settings, from conference halls to farmers' fields.

"The training was a turning point in my life as far as reporting science is concerned. My interviews have improved and since the Arusha workshop I am an award winner; in May 2008 I won the CTA radio script writing competition." Pius Sawa, radio journalist, Uganda - trainee in Arusha and co-trainer in Mombasa. (Science journalism COOPeration).

> **WRENmedia – AGFAX Journalist training**
>
> An eight-day, intensive training course that included a two-day visit to the South Rift valley, enabled African journalists to get first-hand experience of the recent drought in Kenya and the impacts on pastoralists and their livestock. Eight radio and print journalists from East, West and Southern Africa took part.
>
> The trainees had an opportunity to interview researchers and Maasai pastoralists, to gain first-hand experience of how science relates to the lives of livestock keepers.
>
> "I used to think that pastoralists were backwards people," said Oluyinka Alawode, a print journalist from Nigeria. "But having gone to the South Rift valley I have discovered that these people have a wealth of knowledge. These people know so many things that can be validated by science. And I have come to really respect them because they do things in a systematic way."

> Feedback from the livestock experts suggested that they also enjoyed the opportunity to interact with curious and committed journalists keen to improve their reporting on agricultural science.
>
> www.wrenmedia.co.uk/audio.html

WFSJ, based in Ottawa, Canada was so concerned about the poor quality of science journalism that they initiated SjCOOP.

> **The SjCOOP approach**
>
> SjCOOP offered in situ distance training and mentoring in science reporting to 60 African and Arab journalists. Following training, SjCOOP supported the establishment of associations of science journalists in Africa and in the Middle East, twinning young associations with well-established ones. Mentoring of associations was mainly done through meetings, sharing of experience and twinning, conferences and training workshops.
>
> By 2009, when SjCOOP training ended, networks of science journalists were in place in Africa and in the Arab World. The African network includes 9 national associations (6 created by SjCOOP) with a total membership of 408 journalists. The Arab network has two national associations (created through SjCOOP), representing some 215 journalists. They now use internet technologies like Skypechats and Skypecasts to keep in touch with scientists and colleagues.
>
> A key success of SjCOOP has been to make science reporting a pan-Arab and a pan-African reality. http://www.wfsj.org/files/file/projects/SjCOOP_Technical_Report.pdf

ScJOOP developed and used an eight-lesson online course in science journalism which yielded impressive results: trainee journalists created the first pan-African science magazine, five new science TV programs, six new science radio programs, and seven new science beats in newspapers, magazines and news agencies. This eight-lesson online course in science journalism is now freely accessible, and has been so well received that other organizations have funded new versions in Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish.

Relay, Panos London is a multi-country multi-partner programme. Though small in size[29], the breadth and scope of their programme have enabled them to identify replicable methods of working to adapt for different country and regional contexts. Relay has developed a series of workshop methodologies[30] to address the fundamental

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[29] The programme employs approximately five full-time staff members.

[30] Draft case study: Ingrid Yngstrom (2010).The role of the media in good governance: A case study from Kenya on generating media debate on tax, governance and accountability. Relay, Panos London

lack of understanding and mistrust they have identified between researchers and media professionals.

> Ice-breaker sessions in workshops are a core part of the Relay capacity-building approach. They allow researchers and journalists to really break down erroneous ideas and beliefs about each other and provide a platform for moving forward as collaborators on new ground. They open up the possibility of seeing another's perspective and experience. This has the power to begin to breakdown much of the mistrust that exists between them.
>
> When journalists were asked what annoys them the most about researchers, they came up with the following[31]:
>
> *"It is difficult to validate the authenticity and credibility of research."*
>
> *"Researchers don't understand the journalistic process."*
>
> In response, the researchers were aware that credibility was an issue and agreed there was little quality control. They suggested that journalists should know more about the research process so they could to some extent check the credibility of research.
>
> Journalists felt that researchers often complained about the way that journalists present their work, as one journalist said: "They want you to go with what they say. They don't leave space for other opinions and views, but the nature of journalism is to get different views." They felt that because of this researchers didn't trust journalists to report their work accurately.

Relay has found that it is not enough to focus on journalists. Mentoring and supporting the work of editors and managers of media houses is also important. Firstly their support is necessary to open up spaces for journalists to use their new-found skills. In addition there is a high turnover of journalists, whereas editors tend to stay in post longer and can work with Relay to make lasting change possible.

5.3 Building the capacity of researchers to interact with media professionals

There is a reluctance, often well founded, for researchers to release their findings through the media, fearing that in publicising their work to a wider, less scientific audience, they will dilute or misrepresent their findings.

The received case studies from organisations such as Panos's Relay, Mediae Trust, BBC World Service Trust, who are directly targeting the media, brought some very positive and exciting stories. Key to successful communication with the media is the understanding of the pressures under which the various aspects of media operate, as well as their focus and requirements. Journalists are generally looking for good stories – not worthwhile facts and findings. New research findings may not be of interest in

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[31] Panos ice-breaker session, Kenya 2009

themselves, however worthwhile and significant. Journalists are more likely to use them to trigger debate around a wider issue, so that the researcher's work is one of several inputs. Such an approach has several inherent dangers: the researcher's key facts may be under-reported, inaccurately reported, overshadowed or even denied by one of the other inputs.

Investing in building relationships with journalists by researchers is a long-term approach that may yield far-reaching benefits. Such an approach may be initiated by communication officers, who will learn over time which journalists from within the different media show interest and respond to press releases. Arranging a working meeting between these journalists and researchers may provide the basis for building confidence and links on both sides.

Researchers about to publish a paper or give a conference presentation on their recent findings are much more likely to contact a researcher they regard as trustworthy to ask if they are interested in running a relevant story and what information they require. By making themselves available for interview, they provide another outlet for their findings and a direct source of material for journalists.

Relay works to increase the strength of the relationships between journalists, civil society activists and researchers – encouraging openness and trust in their relationships.

Relay methodologies: practice interviews

Within a workshop setting, pairs of journalists and researchers prepare their questions and answers on a selected topic. Each interview is then recorded, with both parties expected to give their best performance.

Having the hands-on experience – for journalists, of interviewing a researcher, and for researchers, giving an interview – is critical so that both can overcome their fears in a safe environment and know that they are equipped to replicate this experience once the workshop is over.

Once each pair had been filmed, the group came back together to watch the interviews and offer comments on:

- how successful the journalist's questions were at eliciting information;

- how clearly research messages were communicated and how confident and composed the researchers were; and

- whether the journalists asked questions on the critical issues.

During the session, journalists and researchers have an opportunity to face their fears and obtain professional and peer feedback in a constructive environment. By going through the exercise of doing an on-camera interview, journalists and researchers can go home confident that they have done it, and that they have obtained practical tips and ideas for improvement from colleagues about how to improve further next time.

All researchers will benefit from clear guidelines on how best to approach media professionals. Relay, Panos and SciDev.Net are among the organisations that make such guidelines freely available.

Global Development Network (GDN) is establishing a new Grants to Individuals Program aimed at building up a critical mass of local researchers who are globally interconnected, well briefed on development issues and who can help bring quality research issues into public policies. This new modular capacity building program will combine training, mentoring, peer-review, framing relevant research, bridging research to policy and networking and will rely heavily on GDNet as an online means of communicating insights gathered. Fellowships will enable early-career researchers to develop a sustainable research-to-policy practice as well as for mid-career researchers to capitalise on their knowledge and promote lifelong networking opportunities for mutual support and collaborative research. Such networking will be international and cross-discipline. Such support recognizes the pressures faced by researchers in combining academic and communication roles.

Inter Press Services (IPS) is a global news agency which aims to raise Southern voices. It gives Southern journalists opportunities to share their insights and stories, bringing a fresh perspective on development and globalisation. Over 70% of their 370 contributors are permanently based in countries of the South and they produce three language editions: English, French and Spanish.

5.4 The provision of source material for media reporting

Presenting research findings in ways that encourage the interest and response of journalists is an important skill, and one that many researchers struggle with. Researchers already face considerable pressure to build academic credibility within their own field and the need to communicate findings through the media places additional stress upon them. This is an area where effective communication officers can make considerable impact, working sensitively with researchers to refine output and gaining good experience about which media contact is most appropriate to target with any given information in order to reach diverse readerships.

Extracting newsworthy facts from academic papers and conference reports is not something many journalists will make time for, so building the capacity of researchers or communication officers to write media friendly press releases is very important and is best done through short training workshops, ideally led by or incorporating journalists and media professionals. Researchers who can identify potential personal stories based around their findings, which provide examples of human impact will help journalists in communicating potential impact and recommended best practice. Simplifying research findings for a press release is a skilled task that does not necessarily imply that the findings have to be 'dumbed down', though this is an area which many researchers struggle with.

Panos Relay's goal is to encourage and support the creation of debate around key development issues through the media to facilitate dialogue that can influence policy and decision making. Among their Southern-based activities is a focus on developing researchers' skills to communicate key messages and findings from their research, particularly to the media, through training workshops and media guides. They also encourage researchers in the production of media briefs to support journalists to work on specific themes and use research as a source. They aim to increase the capacity of researchers to produce policy-relevant research and to work with intermediaries to present it in ways that the media can use.

The Communication Initiative Network, a portal which focuses on enhancing communication and media for development to promote more effective development action, encourages a strong and still growing engagement of media personnel, and has over 5,000 journalists in its network. One of its strategic principles is to provide accurate and well-written knowledge summaries to prevent 'information overload'. When knowledge can be quickly read, digested and assessed, the media and others are much more likely to make use of it, and to follow up the links which enable more in-depth study.

Journalists, by definition, will package research findings to meet the needs of their audiences and focus on a storyline to catch the attention of readers, listeners and viewers. If they struggle to find a storyline within research findings, which will enable them to capture the interest of their audience, they may simply ignore the findings. In addition, by seeking to 'find' a good story line, journalists may take findings. Worse still, findings may be misrepresented, for example by focusing a story on someone who has a different point of view.

Mediae Trust uses a team of experts and researchers who are used both to provide source information and then to check the outputs before Makutano Junction is broadcast. Programmes have included research findings from various DFID-funded research consortia, as well as other information providers, scientists and researchers. This solid factual basis with inbuilt checks has enabled the Trust to gain an excellent reputation for reliable broadcasting. It also keeps in touch with its audience by grounding all its programming in thorough audience research to monitor the impact of programmes on viewers' knowledge, attitude and practice.

Mediae has developed and fine-tuned a process for taking what is often quite complicated information and turning it into compelling storylines for Makutano Junction (and other programmes) which will be of interest to the viewer.

Development content is agreed and confirmed by the content manager and sponsors, and background information is produced for the writing team.

The content manager works with technical experts to develop briefing documents.

The writers and the script editor review the background information and develop storylines for the series.

Summaries of each proposed storyline are given to advisers for feedback.

If the storyline is based around some fairly technical issues, the script editor may also consult the relevant adviser for a review during the story writing process.

Relevant scenes are extracted from an early draft of the script and sent to the appropriate adviser for feedback.

This two-way process allows for both creativity and factual content to be fully respected and provides a useful model for other organisations seeking to work productively with the media.

Since 2006, the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) has collaborated with Mediae to communicate evidence-based sexual and reproductive health and rights messages through Makutano Junction. This has included messages about sexuality, partner violence, obstetric fistula and contraceptives. APHRC provides evidence from its own research and wider literature, contributes to message development and comments on storylines, scripts and print resources for the show.

APHRC and Mediae developed episodes about the risks of unsafe abortion and the fact that post-abortion care is legal in Kenya and available in government and private health facilities. A comic with more detailed information was written and sent to over 1,000 viewers. Many viewers responded with comments and responses by SMS. The abortion storylines help to dispel myths and misinformation about abortion and encourage reflection and debate about abortion in countries where abortion is prohibited, anti-abortion lobbies are extremely influential and there are high rates of morbidity and mortality caused by unsafe abortion. A survey carried out by Steadman Group found that Kenyan viewers of the show reported Makutano Junction to be an important source of information on abortion. 60% of viewers said that the show has helped them to advise others who have unwanted pregnancies.

TV drama has considerable potential for challenging stigma and prejudice by promoting empathy and demonstrating the humanity behind stereotypes. APHRC and Mediae effectively combined research evidence, rights-based messages and compelling drama to produce an entertaining and informative TV show. This research communication activity successfully dealt with a controversial issue in a balanced and informative way, in a context where media coverage is often sensationalised or ill-informed.

5.5 The benefits of positive media impact

Managing and educating media contacts carefully and appropriately can help realise the enormous potential of the general media for sharing research findings, not just among the original national target audience but to a wider, global audience.

Africa Talks Climate (case study 10), an initiative of the BBC World Service Trust, sought firstly to assess public understanding of climate change and then identify how communication and media could best support Africans' response to climate change.

BBC World Service Trust: Africa Talks Climate

Focus group discussions with more than 1,000 people from diverse backgrounds in 10 countries took place during 2009. In addition interviews were held with nearly 200 opinion leaders, including policy makers, religious and community leaders, business people, and media and NGO representatives.

People reported less predictable seasons (particularly the loss of distinct rainy seasons), increases in temperature, and more frequent and intense droughts and floods. They are also very aware of environmental degradation. Many people in rural areas speak of migration as the only viable option to respond to their changing climate. There is little awareness that the climatic problems facing Africa – now or in the future – are likely to have causes that extend beyond their own continent.

www.africatalksclimate.com

From the outset, Africa Talks Climate targeted the media, seeing it as having a critical role to play in responding to climate change. Their recommendations included:

- building a sense of immediacy in raising awareness of global climate change;
- providing simple models of how climate change works;
- confirming people's observations that weather patterns are changing and that extreme weather events are likely to occur more often;
- developing appropriate climate change terminology in African languages; and
- providing local leaders with access to information on climate change, since local adaptation strategies will be based largely on their understanding of the issue.

Mediae Trust produced a popular and effective radio soap opera (Tembea na Majira), broadcast on KBC National Service for over ten years, which attracted around 5.5 million rural Kenyans, at its peak. It aimed to meet audiences' information needs and delivered information in an appealing way, whilst at the same time attracting donors and commercial sponsorship with which to pay for production and transmission costs.

Around 2004, the radio scene in Kenya fragmented. The airways were liberalised and a plethora of small, local vernacular FM stations sprang up. It was no longer possible to attract and retain huge, KiSwahili-speaking audiences, as people preferred to tune into their local FM station. With this shift, there also came a huge rise in TV ownership particularly in the rural areas of Kenya. Mediae Trust then turned their attention to sharing information through television.

TV programmes such as Makutano Junction, as previously discussed, have resulted in high-quality, entertaining, well scripted and well acted drama with educational content.

They have massive appeal and can build huge audiences. Makutano Junction attracts over 7.5 million viewers in Kenya, an estimated 3 million in Uganda and another 2 million in Tanzania. Programmes work to build capacity both in production skills and researchers to build a creative team and crystallise key findings for mass audiences. They comment that, "Some researchers get it, others don't!" Researchers would benefit from communications to show the potential benefits of this kind of media initiative.

5.6 Impacting on good governance

The media offer a powerful means through which to generate debate around issues related to policy, reform and good governance. Media coverage and debate, which are informed by research and evidence, enable CSOs and the general public to better understand particular issues and ultimately may result in effective advocacy for change.

 "If knowledge created by researchers is shared and debated publicly, it is more likely to be adopted by policymakers and practitioners."[32] A recent report from Panos goes on to comment that "Media debates can fuel public interest and concern over particular issues, adding to existing pressure on governments to change policy."

The media have an important role in fostering government accountability, enabling citizens to be informed of the issues that shape their lives, catalysing debate and dialogue in society, articulating cultural diversity and forming national identity, and in mediating (or disrupting) state citizen relationships especially in fragile states. The BBC World Service Trust believes all these roles are recognised as being important in the international governance community.

While policy makers may place a high value on the contribution media makes to governance and development, they place a low priority on it. This is what a BBC World Service Trust research survey of more than 20 senior level governance advisers and figures calls the 'engagement gap'.

"There is an 'engagement gap' between the value assigned to its role by policy makers and the practical provision made for it in development planning, thinking and spending."[33]

The same study, plus other research carried out by the Trust and the World Bank and others, finds that media as a governance priority is generally very low.

The BBC World Service Trust, with funding from DFID, and using a combination of direct policy engagement and strong research, has been working with a range of

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[32] Carpenter, J and Yngstrom, I., PANOS; *Research makes the news: strengthening media engagement with research to influence policy,* March 2010, PANOS London.

[33] Kathy Lines (2009) 'Governance and the Media, A Survey of Policy Opinion', BBC World Service Trust: London

international actors to close this gap. Its goal was not necessarily to achieve an increase in donor spending on media, but to ensure that media as a governance issue was more systematically understood and considered within development policy, particularly within the governance agenda. The DFID-funded Policy and Research Programme on the Role of Media and Communication in Development is unusual within the DFID Research Communication portfolio, because, like the World Bank CommGAP programme, it both generates and communicates research and policy analysis, specifically focused on the role of media and communication in development.

Three research findings shaped the approach used.

1. Evidence was important, and needed to be applied and made relevant to specific governance problems and contexts.

2. It is important to learn from previous attempts to make media and communication a clearer development priority. Policy makers often felt they were being confronted with arguments and evidence in isolation from the central development dilemmas they were dealing with. They found they were expected to engage in a set of arguments over what they could do to support media rather than how media support helped them address the key concerns they were focused on.

3. The governance community has found issues of support to media as being more problematic than most. They have been considered by governance actors often as being "messy", "political" and "difficult"[34].

The approach used by the BBC World Service Trust programme can be summarised as focusing on the development and governance challenge, not the media challenge.

A Panos case study from Jamaica clearly illustrates how the media can impact on good governance.

Working conditions in Jamaica

In 2006, research in Jamaica35 by Ann-Murray Brown into the working conditions of women employed in wholesale stores in Kingston found that the employers were breaking several national employment and labour laws in contravention of international treaties (including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)) to which Jamaica was a signatory.

In 2007, Brown presented her research findings to stakeholders brought together by Panos Relay at a workshop for the CEDAW Advocacy Committee (CAC), which was

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[34] Kathy Lines (2009) 'Governance and the Media, A Survey of Policy Opinion', BBC World Service Trust: London, p32, p11, p15

[35] Ann-Murray Brown (2007) Gender and labour in Jamaica, modern day slavery. MA dissertation, University of the West Indies.

campaigning around Jamaica's poor progress in implementing CEDAW. CAC integrated Brown's research into its existing advocacy campaign and advised the Minister of Labour and Social Security of the findings. Two months later with no response, CAC decided to release the story to the media using a press release and a workshop targeting journalists interested in labour rights and women's issues. All three national newspapers ran front-page news stories. Radio stations took up the story in their phone-in programmes. Two days later, the newspapers published responses from the ministry, which promised to investigate the issue.

One paper sent a reporter to work undercover in a wholesale outlet. When this story was published a month or so later, a new wave of public outrage ensued. The media ran with the story for several months and helped sustain debate – which was very useful given CAC's limited resources to run an advocacy campaign.

In July 2009, the senate passed the Factories Amendment Bill, paving the way for the implementation of heavier fines for breaches of provisions of the Factories Act and its regulations.

(Adapted from a longer study with permission of Panos[36])

By highlighting an issue that was already on the government's agenda, the media were able to increase public awareness and put pressure on the government to tighten up on compliance. Although the passing of the Factories Amendment Bill cannot be directly attributed to influence from press coverage of Brown's research, it is likely to have played an important role.[37]

The Mediae TV programme Makutano Junction, has been able to help audiences understand their rights and what services should be delivered to them by government/donors/civil society, as well as how to access these facilities and benefit from them. They established an SMS service, for viewers to text in after watching a programme to give comments and also to request a leaflet which elucidates further on strands within the show.

In certain contexts, lack of press freedom to cover potentially politically sensitive or controversial topics may prevent journalists from using research findings, despite their relevance to good governance (the previous South African government's policy on HIV and AIDS provides a useful example).

The role of media has special relevance to some of the most pressing development challenges of our time. That role tends to have different dynamics depending on the issue. Among other key issues, the BBC World Service Trust has focused on aid

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[36] Carpenter, J and Yngstrom, I (2010). *Research makes the news: strengthening media engagement with research to influence policy*. A study undertaken by Panos London.

[37] Carpenter, J et al (2010), op cit.

effectiveness to promote domestic accountability strategies, balanced and informative election coverage, the dynamics of development in fragile states and the need for information in humanitarian disasters.

The Trust is not the only institution seeking to inform policy thinking on media and communication issues. Its strategy is to complement and, where appropriate, partner with these agencies rather than compete. A sister programme at the World Bank (CommGAP) is documented elsewhere in this report. The Trust supports the Communication Initiative, the Global Forum for Media Development as well as other international actors.

5.7 Impact on general public

Support for media has historically focused on supporting institutions and practitioners – media houses and journalists. However, given the transformative character of the 21st century information revolution and the increasingly ubiquitous access to mobile telephony, even in some of the poorest and most fragile states, it is key to also focus on the information and communication needs of citizens. A major research and policy exercise carried out by the BBc World Service Trust, Africa Talks Climate (funded by the British Council but catalysed by funding from DFID's support) mapped citizen level perceptions of climate change. The Trust has 50 researchers worldwide focused principally on understanding and responding to the information and communication needs of people living in poverty. The programme works to connect insights from this research, combined with research from media mapping and scoping exercises, with mainstream development policy debates. This research also provides key insights into which media support interventions work and which do not. Support from the DFID programme is significantly responsible for the BBC World Service Trust's research and impact assessment work being described as constituting an international 'Gold Standard' by a recent US National Endowment for Democracy report.

Africa Talks Climate also sought to increase opinion leaders' understanding of global climate change and adaptation. As an example: the launch of its Kenya regional report brought the following commitment from the Kenyan Prime Minister, Rt Hon Raila Odinga, during the regional launch of the research findings: "*We shall launch a major awareness campaign to make sure every citizen knows consequences of climate change and what each of us has to do to help stop climate change*".

www.africatalksclimate.com

5.8 Key observations

- The case studies provide strong evidence of some innovative and effective approaches to working effectively with the media to achieve considerable impact. Sharing these approaches hopefully encourages their adaptation and replication.

- The building of coalitions and networks allows positive working relationships to develop between researchers, media professionals and CSO staff, based upon an understanding of each others' constraints and interests, which should result in maximum impact for policy relevant findings.

- Researchers need clear guidelines in how best to approach media channels and benefit from opportunities to meet with and gain better understanding of journalists and their needs at conferences or workshops.

- Researchers need to gain skills and confidence in communicating their findings for journalists. Specific skills are required to package and present research findings into media packs.

- Communication officers provide effective liaison points with journalists but direct interaction between researchers and journalists should also be encouraged to ensure accuracy and authority.

- Researchers must recognise and work to maintain the independence of media, providing them with source materials rather than attempting to 'use' them.

- Mentoring of journalists is a long-term investment for research communication which when done effectively, can yield considerable impact.

- Situations and issues can change rapidly. All stakeholders need to be aware of this and use strategic opportunities and careful timing to share relevant information.

- Building extensive media capacity is always subject to the prevailing freedom of the press and the political context.

6 Implications for resourcing successful research communication

6.1 Background

It is widely accepted that, without adequate communication, the impact of research on policy development and poverty reduction is impaired. The case studies included in this publication give many instances where communication has been critical to the success of a development initiative. Pre-dating the publication of DFID's *Research Strategy 2008-13*, a workshop held at IDS in October 2006[38] identified some of the issues:

There is now a growing base of experience on how to construct an effective research communication strategy, and a number of toolkits and guidelines provide advice on this.

Time and resources need to be set aside to do communication well. Budgets for outputs and events need to be ring-fenced, but probably more importantly the time required to follow through on communication work needs to be recognised, funded and allocated, and structures and people put in place.

Good communication work costs money. Given constraints on research funding, especially at a time of general economic caution, finding the most cost-effective way of making an impact is a key part of devising a realistic communication strategy.

The survey showed funders are taking action in a number of ways: requiring communication plans at the grant application stage; providing communication and budget guidelines; and monitoring communication efforts.

6.2 DFID's policies

DFID itself has accepted the need for specified communication research funding for some years. All RPCs are asked to develop a communication strategy, and to allocate a minimum of 10% of their overall research budgets to its design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. This is projected eventually to rise to as high as 30% for getting knowledge and technology into use – of which communication is one part. There would be many benefits, including new specialized and skilled communication support staff, more research on communication, and the possibility of decentralizing many research communication functions to bring research closer to users.[39]

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[38] http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/idspublication/maximising-the-impact-of-development-research-how-can-funders-encourage-more-effective-research-communication

[39] Lessons learnt in research communication: DFID's 10% policy on communicating research - successes, challenges and next steps December 2008

The working paper on capacity building accompanying the DFID strategy recognises that public policies work best when they are designed and implemented by local actors. Without locally-generated data and analysis, well-intentioned programmes often do not respond to realities on the ground. Funders now recognise this but often fail to invest in the local institutions that can do the ongoing research, analysis, knowledge brokering and presentation needed by policy makers.

DFID recognises that access to new knowledge in developing countries is strongly influenced by local capacity to access, use and deliver new knowledge. Integrating good communication practices in research projects and programmes from the start and throughout is one mechanism for making research more accessible and useful. To that effect it provides quite detailed guidance notes[40] on the communication of research, including the preparation of communication strategies, action plans and budgets. For example:

> - "Have you prepared a realistic budget to implement and share progress on your Action Plan?
>
> - Think about start-up costs (e.g. developing the strategy, designing a website to share research processes and later, results etc.) as well as on-going costs (e.g. convening workshops to share results with stakeholders, shaping policy discussions, field demonstrations, trials, etc).
>
> - If you're thinking about a website, what will happen to it at the end of the Research Programme?
>
> - Also include costs for developing information products and packaging them for different audiences through discussion groups, networks, websites, conferences, radio, drama, etc.
>
> - Note that a minimum of 10% of the overall RPC budget should be spent on the communication of research."

6.3 Impact of the 10% rule

The Hoveland et al review of research communication in DFID-funded RPCs[41] that formed the basis of the DFID 2008 10% workshop examined the effectiveness of the 10% policy by comparing DFID-funded RPCs subject to the 10% rule with other DFID-funded programmes and organisations that were not subject to this constraint. It concluded, amongst other insights that:

- DFID's 10% rule on research communication, and accompanying support, has clearly had a significant positive impact on communication activities within the RPC themselves, but it is less clear what impact the rule itself has had on the organisations hosting RPCs; and

- most RPCs probably spend more than the stipulated 10% of their budget on communication, if one uses an appropriately wide definition.

Compared with non-RPC actors:

- the RPCs with a communication budget not only engage in dissemination activities on a project-by-project basis, but also approach communication at the programme level, for example through a communication strategy and the appointment of a person responsible for programme-wide communication;

- the RPCs are overall more embedded in their policy and country contexts, for example through stakeholder consultations, long-term partnerships with in-country research organisations, in-country advisory groups, engagement with policy makers, and a comprehensive set of in-country communication activities (including media); and

- the RPCs are overall more turned towards engagement and communication with policy and policy makers, rather than direct engagement with poor communities.

Its recommendations included:

- continuing with the policy of a minimum spend on communication in the RPCs;

- considering rolling out a similar minimum spend on communication across all research programmes funded by DFID, in association with similar communication guidelines and support;

- considering increasing the 10% threshold to 15% for the next round of RPCs – and announcing a review at the end of the period that suggests a possible further increase;

- establishing a community of practice;

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[41]http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/Communication/Review_of_DFID_ResearchTenPercent_policy_research_communication_June09.pdf

- providing incentives, guidelines and resources to develop the organisational capacities for communication of the RPC partners;

- funding research (maybe via the community of practice) on research communication; and

- continuing to lobby other research funders and encouraging them to also invest more in research communication.

Some of these recommendations are also reflected in Triple Line's published reviews of the research communication programmes[42] and in its more recent work:

- The review of DFID's human development and agriculture portfolio study shows strong commitment to making research available, accessible and useable. It suggests that given the extent of DFID's investment in health and agricultural research, research communication in these sectors may be under-funded and that the portfolio plays little role in enabling better use of their ring-fenced 10% allocations.

- It recommends increased support for research on research communication to explore how the allocation of communication resources (the 10%) is being used to build Southern capacity and to enable South-based institutions to take forward a communication agenda.

- It suggests that there may be opportunities for research communication participants to learn and work together. One approach is that of MK4D, which 'bundles' together a number of programmes which DFID was earlier funding independently. The bundling approach is said to have resulted in some added value through working together.

- The Triple Line survey of funding bodies again found wide interest in and general consensus on the importance of research communication, with some, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, expressing interest in putting more resources into better communication. On the downside, despite many promising initiatives, most donors do not appear to have a strategic approach to research communication, and do not seem to make best use either of their own or other donors' experiences, suggesting that DFID may have a role in supporting donor organisations outside its area of influence in raising the profile of research communication.

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[42] op. cit. and B Adolph et al. (2010) Learning lessons on research communication and uptake: A review of DFID human development and agriculture portfolios and their contribution to making research available, accessible and useable. To be published

6.4 Responses from the case studies

Feedback from the 17 research communication programmes supported by DFID has concentrated more on project content than on drawing out the implications for resourcing successful research communication. However, the examples below give a flavour of the policy level concerns and intentions raised by the DFID research strategy.

1. KAINet addresses the national policy to build a Kenyan national agricultural science and technology information system. A key point from its case study was the need for analysis of human and ICT resources and the subsequent establishment of the required institutional policies to provide an enabling environment, and to make available the necessary resources through training, capacity building and infrastructure investment.

2. SciDev.Net helps individuals and organisations in the developing world make informed decisions on science- and technology-related issues by providing reliable and authoritative information through its free-access website. It concentrates on supporting skilled professional communicators, journalists and other information professionals in their own countries, and thus resources its network of correspondents from local sources.

3. INASP programmes focus on strengthening the research communication system, with particular emphasis on the needs of developing and emerging countries. Two of its case studies describe the exploitation of existing but under-used information resources through skills building, and the transfer to local control of INASP's journals online project in Africa and Asia.

4. IDRC, in the ICT4D programmes Acacia (with focus in Africa) and Pan Asia finds that these networks have successfully demonstrated that evidence-based research is key to influencing local policy changes, particularly in relation to the cost of ICT facilities.

5. FAO has facilitated the emergence of the Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research for Development (CIARD) initiative with other key international and regional actors to leverage existing resources and expertise through partnerships, leading to more coherence in policy and practice and greater effectiveness of interventions in support of research communications.

6.5 Key observations

The many case studies in this publication, building on the findings of the other reviews cited here, strongly support the case for the strategic role of research communication in making a difference to the alleviation of poverty and the empowerment of people in developing countries. Well run communication programmes will effect policy changes and reach out as far as the individual whose life is being affected. Our somewhat episodic findings illustrate the complexity of resourcing issues throughout the

communication network represented by researchers, funders, intermediaries, policy makers and practitioners, with outcomes that are not always obvious at the project design phase. Nevertheless, the following observations can be offered:

- Making the funding of research communication a headline commitment through the DFID 10% rule has been helpful to the overall objective of applying research results more effectively. In addition, it has improved internal disciplines in research programmes to ensure that communication happens in practice.

- The 10% rule has been widely accepted. In practice, spending by some organisations has exceeded 10%, and there are calls for the mandatory proportion of spend on research communication to be increased beyond this.

- Outside the DFID-supported sector, donors have also expressed wide interest, and there is a general consensus on the importance of research communication. However, there is as yet little quantitative information on how this is implemented in their programmes, and DFID support in resource planning and monitoring may be desirable.

- Feedback from individual research communication programmes suggests a need for investment with a longer reach, allowing infrastructures, disciplines and local experts to be embedded, as well as more devolution of resources for and control of research communication initiative to the local level where much expertise resides.

- There is a desire and scope for pooling and more efficient use of resources thorough formal and informal partnerships between programmes and research communication bodies.

- There is a case for more research on research communication generally, and more specifically on the balance of resources required, on who provides them where along the communication chain, the way they are applied most cost effectively and the value for money they represent in the context of the total development effort.

6.6 References to further information

DFID research strategy 2008-2013
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/consultation/DFID_ResearchStrategy2008HIGHRES.pdf

DFID Research Strategy working paper series: Research communication
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/Consultation/ResearchStrategyWorkingPaperfinal_communications_P1.pdf

DFID Research Strategy working paper series: Capacity building
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/Consultation/ResearchStrategyWorkingPaperfinal_capacity_P1.pdf

7 Engagement with the private sector

This section reviews the contributions that the private sector is playing in research communication and how it might contribute in future and looks at some of the issues that either attract or potentially deter private sector participation. It shows that communication efforts can be greatly enhanced by working with the private sector; indeed it is difficult to make a serious impact without engaging with it.

7.1 Background

A simplistic way of defining the private or commercial sector is that it is composed of privately owned or listed organisations that exist to make a profit from their activities. Some of their work may be contracted by the public sector, they may be partly or even wholly owned by the public sector, they may give charitable support as part of their corporate social responsibility remit, but primarily they are there to produce a profit for their owners. Charitable foundations that contribute heavily to research and its communication – for example the Wellcome Trust or the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation – do not fall within this group. We also do not explicitly include the media generally, which are largely in the private sector. They are critical to research communication but are covered extensively in other chapters of this publication.

In straitened economic circumstances the motivation for involving the private sector may be primarily financial. However, the sector has other attributes it can offer: specific expertise such as publishing, media and marketing skills, local knowledge or global reach, management competence and others. Commercial companies are used to partnering where their own competences fall short of what is required for a particular undertaking, and they are constantly looking for opportunities to expand their markets. Working with the private sector for the public good also makes for a more inclusive approach to development.

It is part of DFID's policy expressed in its *Research Strategy 2008–13*[43] to involve the private sector in development research through partnerships: "The private sector is often best placed to develop and distribute innovative solutions to development problems." The working paper on research communication accompanying the strategy[44] specifically calls on DFID to "engage the private sector in positive partnerships, for

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[43] http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/Research-Strategy-08.pdf

[44] http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/Consultation/ResearchStrategyWorkingPaperfinal_communications_P1.pdf

example by providing seed money for the research communication community to link-up with Google and Wikipedia, developing platforms for user-generated content, highlighting innovations and knowledge gaps, promoting transparency, and sharing information in a way that is not necessarily literacy dependent. There was a call to understand better the different political and regulatory environments in which ICTs can bring benefits to the poor, and under what circumstances they can be drivers, for instance, of economic growth."

By contrast, references to the private sector in case studies or reports more often than not merely express the desirability of involving commercial companies rather than giving examples or making a case for these organisations to take an interest. Indeed, the *Triple Line Report*[45] reveals that only 4% of research communication programmes (weighted by annual average DFID contribution) have private sector companies or public-private partnerships as lead organisations. WRENmedia is a private limited multimedia production company. Mediae operates as a limited company in Kenya but as a charity in the UK. The examples that follow illustrate what kinds of contribution have been made by the private sector and what lessons can be learned from them

7.2 Commercial arrangements

An attractive example of involving commercial enterprises is **Makutano Junction**[46], run by the Mediae Company and Trust and part of a suite of initiatives that includes television, radio and other media that transmit development messages to large audiences in Africa. Makutano Junction itself is a weekly drama series set in a typical peri-urban East African town. It has a regular audience in Kenya of over 6.5 million viewers, together with viewers in other countries.

Mediae has had success with securing prime-time slots for Makutano Junction in Kenya, first with Kenya Broadcasting Corporation and then with Citizen. Citizen was particularly keen to take Makutano Junction: the programme fitted with its strategy of broadcasting local programming, attracting big audiences to its station. It has been much harder, however, to secure prime time on other African country stations at affordable rates. Mediae's strategy has been to cover production costs with funding from different donor organisations and information providers who wish to reach large audiences, and to cover airtime costs with funding from the commercial sector, by advertising, corporate sponsorship or product placement.

There was some initial success with sponsorship from Unilever, split between the broadcaster and the programme maker, and later from Kenya Power and Lighting which provided benefit in kind (free power). The Unilever arrangement conflicted with the interests of its advertising agency and was not renewed. After moving to Citizen, there was sponsorship of a kind in that Makutano Junction has been allowed to run free

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[45] http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/Misc_InfoComm/DFIDCommsPart1finalreport120609.pdf

[46] http://www.mediae.org/makutano_junction

of charge and has gained its position as one of the most popular TV dramas in Kenya, thus supporting Citizen TV to maintain its excellent ratings. Obtaining further sponsorship has been made difficult by Citizen's own efforts to attract sponsorship for its own productions.

Mediae has managed to attract two other sponsors: Kenyan Charity Sweepstake, which paid approximately US$6,000 for some product placement, and Tuskies Supermarket, which paid $18,000, again for product placement (a Tuskies store on the Makutano Junction high street). But attracting big commercial advertisers remains difficult, possibly not helped by the fact that Makutano Junction viewers are largely rural or peri-urban and do not necessarily have the disposable income that advertisers are looking for.

> **Lesson:** Commercial companies will support communication initiatives but they must be in their commercial interests.

In another straightforward commercial arrangement, in East Africa, CABI[47] has managed the project 'Mobile solutions to network regional national agricultural research institutes (NARS)'. This project linked with partnerships established and funded via ASARECA through its Regional Agricultural Information Network (RAIN), the ASARECA Coffee Research Network (CORNET) and via **Virtual City** (a private sector organisation).

The project tested the value and use of mobile devices and technologies, such as SMS, to enhance networking and targeted information dissemination within and between agricultural research institutions. It identified and commissioned an ICT company to design the information system. Work plans were agreed between CABI, Virtual City, RAIN and CORNET network coordinators and the project has moved into an implementation and assessment phase.

Africa calling: Underpinning much of research communication efforts is the technology available. Under the banner 'Africa Calling'[48] there has been a revolution in mobile telecommunications in sub-Saharan Africa since 1993, when the South African government granted national mobile phone licenses to MTN South Africa Ltd, Johannesburg, and Vodacom Group (Pty) Ltd, Sandton, two part-government-owned companies. These organisations quickly built large customer bases in South Africa, and eventually other African nations, by offering prepaid calling cards that attract customers who cannot afford monthly phone bills, do not have postal addresses or do not have bank accounts. People pay as they go, and only as much as they can afford.

These developments, which have helped make sub-Saharan Africa into the world's fastest growing wireless market, were stimulated by poorly managed national

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[47] http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/CABI/CDFtoDFID2007.pdf

[48] V W A and I Mbarika (2006) http://spectrum.ieee.org/telecom/wireless/africa-calling/2

communications monopolies, the lower scale of investment required for wireless compared with landline communication and the switching of companies like Telkom Kenya Ltd from landline to wireless investment. A final element has been the ubiquitous wireless-phone kiosk, where customers can rent mobile phones by the minute rather than having to purchase them.

The benefits for research communication are obvious in that two-way contact between providers and consumers – for information flow, project management and direct feedback – is greatly facilitated.

7.3 Partnerships

The need for making research from the North available in the South is well documented: research results need to be communicated at various levels, Southern researchers need access to the information to enable them to make their own research contribution and research results need to be made more widely available. Traditional economic models employed by publishers have made it difficult to consult Northern literature in the South, because of the high cost of subscriptions and also inadequate internet access.

INASP has for many years been working with society and commercial publishers to improve access to publications and now works with over 50 publishers and aggregators. Now running under the name of 'Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERii)',[49] the initiative has been highly successful and the collaboration with publisher partners very fruitful.

PERii partners with country coordinating teams, who identify the resources required within their country and coordinate training, promotion and evaluation of the resources available. On their behalf, the information delivery team at INASP negotiates (or supports local negotiation) with publishers and other content owners to obtain access to resources at a price that is proportionate to the socio-economic situation and infrastructure within each country. To ensure long term, sustainable access, the models for access are a combination of heavily discounted and free subscriptions.

The information delivery component of PERii enables library consortia to select multidisciplinary resources from over 50 publishers and aggregators. The negotiated content available includes:

- over 25,000 online journals (more than 18,000 as full text);
- over 11,000 e-books;
- citation and bibliographic databases; and
- document delivery from the British Library.

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[49] http://www.inasp.info/file/5f65fc9017860338882881402dc594e4/perii.html

Equity is at the heart of PERii, with the hope of strengthening and encouraging the growth of library consortia and the information infrastructure within countries, and the information delivery team negotiates countrywide access for all eligible institutions whenever possible. Access to the resources is free to researchers at the point of use.

The attraction of such arrangements to publishers is clear: they have access to markets from which their conventional economic models exclude them; they receive considerable support in market research and negotiation from the PERii programme; they make commercial contacts in the various markets that could benefit them in the future; and they also earn valuable Brownie points.

Lesson: Altruism and commercial good sense are not mutually exclusive.

An initiative with similar intent is **Research4Life**.[50] This is the collective name for three public-private partnerships which seek to help achieve the UN's millennium development goals by providing the developing world with free or very low-cost access to the full text of critical scientific and social science research. Beginning in 2002, the three programmes – Programme for Access to Health Research (HINARI); Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA); and Online Access to Research in the Environment (OARE) – have given researchers at 8000 institutions in 109 developing countries free or low-cost access to over 7,000 journals and periodicals from over 150 of the world's leading academic and professional publishers.

Research4Life programmes have bridged the knowledge gap and have impacted on the research – and the lives – of those living in some of the world's poorest countries. Participation is open to not-for-profit national, academic, research or government institutions and is free of charge in 67 countries with per-capita gross national income (GNI) of less than US$1,250, with institutions in a further 42 countries with a GNI between $1,250-$3,500 required to pay an annual fee of $1,000. It is a public-private partnership of the WHO, FAO, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Cornell and Yale Universities and the International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM), coordinating the input from over 150 publishers. It works together with technology partner Microsoft Corporation, which has contributed well over $1 million in kind in technology resources and expertise in areas like user authentication, customer relationship management, web portal building and cross-programme search facility provision.

"In medical work and in training and in research, information is something very crucial. We need to know what is done elsewhere. Before we knew about Hinari finding information was very difficult. HINARI [helps] us to have the data we need in real time. We just have to go to the website, do the appropriate search and then we can download the resources that are there. It solves...problems of training and treating patient[s]." Dr Mahammoud Jaro, Urologist, Dakar Senegal

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[50] http://www.research4life.org/

The participating publishers feel that the initiative confers positive perceptions by their stakeholders, ensures that their content is used and cited more widely and helps to build research capacity and information awareness, encourages authors from developing countries to publish their research, and increases global awareness of their brands. Microsoft considers Research4Life as a flagship project for its 'Citizenship' CSR programme as a principal area of collaboration with the UN system, given that education is a priority area that is core to the company's mission.

The participants in the Research4Life and INASP programmes overlap, with the former perhaps having benefited from being able to make a persuasive case to commercial publishers through STM, a common interest and trade association.

Along similar lines, **SciDev.Net** also receives in-kind support through partnerships with commercial organisations. For example, the prestigious *Nature* and *Science* magazines both provide SciDev with free access to selected papers and articles each week.

In this context, it is worth drawing attention to the **'open access'** movement that argues that publicly funded research should be freely accessible to all. A number of research funding agencies such as Wellcome have started to require their grantees to make their journal articles freely available on an open access web site such as PubMed Central. Again this approach conflicts with the business models of society and commercial publishers who, nevertheless, have begun to ease access to their journals to readers outside their traditional subscriber base.

Finally, **African Enterprise Challenge Foundation,**[51] whose fund manager is KPMG Development Services Ltd, is a new entrant into the market of brokering contact between research and business, supporting business innovation based on agricultural research. It's Research into Business window is open for business opportunities throughout Africa and to both African and international applicants. It is not confined to research communication projects and is calling for proposals that combine profitability with developmental and social impact. It seeks to promote risk-taking and innovation to encourage established businesses to extend their core activities in ways that create opportunities for rural low-income people. First round applications closed in May 2010. A companion initiative is the Virtual Market Place, a web-based portal where research institutions showcase technologies they have available that are ready for uptake by the private sector.

Two further new organisations aiming to make links between participants in n the effort to further development are:

- **Africa Gathering**,[52] which provides a space to bring technophiles, thinkers, entrepreneurs, innovators and everybody else together to talk about positive

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[51] http://www.rib.aecfafrica.org/index.php

[52] http://www.africagathering.org/about.php

change in sustainable development, technology, social networking, health, education, environment and good governance in Africa; and

- **Enterprise in Action**[53], seeking business sponsorship to help women and communities experiencing disadvantage in developing countries establish successful businesses.

7.4 Research Into Use

Research Into Use (RIU)[54] is an innovative DFID programme that aims to accumulate and evaluate evidence to shape and share lessons on how best to enable innovation in the agricultural sector so as to achieve social and economic gains in diverse developing country settings. The programme is public-private partnership led, based on the hypothesis that the private sector has not played an adequate role in public agricultural research and allied activities. It sometimes has research expertise of its own. It also has incentives structures and mechanism to deliver demanded technologies to consumers, farmers and others in the value chain.

A recent review[55] of RIU's 'Best Bets' suggests the emergence of a new class of private enterprises in East Africa that would appear to be able to fulfill this role. These organisations occupy a niche that sits between the mainstream for-profit enterprises and the developmental activities of government programmes, NGOs and development projects. This type of enterprise activity is not corporate social responsibility, but an altogether new type of business model that is blending entrepreneurial skills and perspectives with mission statements that seek to serve the needs of poor customers and their welfare. The ethos is both bottom-up and bottom line.

RIU is proactive and attempts to bring together a variety of partners with a common purpose, so that many of its initiatives are by their nature communicative, even if the formal communication component – workshops, media, use of ICT – may be secondary. A flavour of the richness of the RIU approach is given in by a few examples below:

Shujaaz brings agricultural messages to young people and has been developed by the Nairobi-based communications company Well Told Story. The idea is simple: that getting messages out to young people is easier if you engage them through popular culture and use the right language. The project combines three powerful and accessible youth-focused media: nationally distributed free monthly comic books; daily syndicated FM radio and (planned) television programmes; and interactive SMS (for audience

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[53] http://www.enterpriseinaction.com/index.php?page=37

[54] www.researchintouse.com

[55] Andy Hall (2010) Bottom-up bottom line business models and the role of development-relevant enterprises www.researchintouse.com

feedback). The daily radio programmes and planned televised animated cartoons are complemented by a weekly half-hour radio phone-in discussion programme.

The list of planned stories includes: termites as chicken feed; vaccination of chickens; multiplication and marketing of new and improved varieties of sweet potatoes and cassava; new and improved maize varieties and fertilizer supplies to appropriate areas; seed priming (soaking); and conservation tillage.

The third edition of Shujaaz hit the streets early May 2010. The project has now received support which will double production of the comic each month. From June 2010 the print run for *Shujaaz* was set to increase to 600,000 copies, making it the largest circulation publication in Kenya.

"Making our daily radio show involves us phoning and interviewing people who send interesting texts. The reports of people taking action based on the comic are really exciting. Yesterday a man in Malindi explained how, after reading Shujaaz, he cautiously dyed two of his chicks with gentian violet as instructed by Charlie Pele in the comic. He quickly realised that they were protected from the hawks (which take between 50-80% of rural chicks) and dyed all the rest of his chicks. And now he's seen his neighbours following suit." Rob Burnet

Resources for smallholder farmers: *Shujaaz* is also the communication partner in a project to address low agricultural productivity amongst smallholder farmers, of which there are some 15 million families in East Africa. They typically farm less than one hectare, do not use improved crop varieties and apply little or no chemical fertilizer. Consequently, crop yields are rarely sufficient to meet even the families' needs, let alone produce a surplus for sale. Technology is available to increase productivity, but the appropriate inputs are not locally accessible nor are they affordable. There is also a chronic lack of advice at the village level.

The lead organisation for the project is Farm Input Promotions Africa (FIPS-Africa) Ltd. FIPS-Africa works closely with input supply companies and the national agricultural research centres to create demand for new varieties of crops and improved fertilizer blends. The FIPS-Africa model is based on a network of village-based agricultural advisors recruited and trained by FIPS-Africa from the communities they will serve. These networks are linked closely to private sector seed and fertiliser companies and to agricultural research stations in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. One of these companies, Kenya Seed Company, has donated four tonnes of seed for promotion of the programme, packed into 25g bags for dissemination to 160,000 farmers in Kenya.

FIPS-Africa's methodology will be reinforced by *Shujaaz*, which will use its communication tools to raise awareness and create demand amongst Kenya's young people for FIPS-Africa's services whilst at the same time acting as a catalyst for young people to become part of the FIPS-Africa network.

RIU Tanzania: "We are exploring a public-private partnership managed Agro-infoCom system (agricultural information). We got a good response to its request for

expressions of interest to develop a concept note and business plan for the system. We are now in the final stages of selecting the consultants. We have developed a model to establish rural service centres for information dissemination. Our role in the system will focus on capacity building for service delivery and developing of linkages between the centres and our extended networks." Vera Mugittu

Stopstriga: The objective of this programme, whose lead organisation is The Real IPM Company Ltd, Thika, Kenya, is to promote methods that minimize crop losses due to Striga by enabling small-scale farmers to prime (soak with added nutrients) their own seeds and then treat them with a proven mycoherbicide. It hopes to have 48,000 households using the technology by April 2011.

Early highlights (March 2010) have included:

- filming of Henry Wainwright, the Director of Real IPM, demonstrating how the technology is to be used and a report from the field on how Striga affects small-scale farmers;

- the initial stages for setting up the mobile phone and GIS technology system have been completed;

- development of the first batch of the seeds to be primed with phosphate fertiliser has been undertaken, and 50 farmers have been identified;

- trials on Stopstriga, the fungal product to controls Striga, are being conducted; and

- training content and materials are being prepared and regional training centres in Nyanza province have been identified.

Progress to date: An early review[56] of the RIU Best Bets programmes (all, not only communications) points to both successes and challenges, and in particular notes differences between East and West Africa. There was perhaps greater awareness of the call in East Africa and also more capacity in East Africa for active support by RIU where the latter had a much stronger network. In some cases, such as Well Told Story's *Shujaaz*, the proposals were actively facilitated by RIU. This suggests that greater investment in raising awareness, providing more guidance and actively helping to develop strong proposals should be more explicitly included in the Best Bets process.

West African proposals tended to rely more on public sector partners than those from East Africa. This is perhaps a reflection of the stronger (but still developing) linkages between the private sector and research communities found in East compared to West Africa. It has also been suggested that strong national SME sectors could have been an important factor in successful Best Bets bids.

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[56] http://www.researchintouse.com/resources/riu10bb-lessonslearned.pdf

The review concludes that, to ensure wider applicability of the RIU's Best Bets initiative, including in countries with poorly developed private sectors or those with weak linkages between researchers and the private sector, a more proactive approach is required during the concept note writing phase. This could include direct support to the teams developing proposals, brokering stronger partnerships and actively seeking out promising research-into-use opportunities.

Proactive intervention: RIU Tanzania shows the way forward in its proposed information and communication innovation platform[57], the programme being active to July 2011. The objective is to improve the exchange of agricultural information between information sources and targeted end users through a functional public-private partnership.

A business plan for the system has been developed to provide overall direction in terms of operation, funding mechanisms and tasks for sub-systems. The information and communication system is being implemented at the national level with piloting of commodities produced in specific areas. However, depending on the business requirements of the engaged private sector, greater coverage might become necessary to make processes cost-effective. The programme will start with a pilot public-private sector information generation and dissemination system in the poultry sector.

One approach being tested will develop a functional, private-sector managed information packaging and brokerage system. The programme is working to identify actors and establish a team to repackage content for dissemination as printed materials, digital content and broadcast media, in line with emerging needs. From the private sector this is likely to include mass communication specialists, journalists, specialists in documentation, graphic and layout designers, printers, photographers, cartoonists, translators and web masters.

Lesson: Established and nascent private sectors in developing countries are a fruitful target for partnerships, often working to different economic models to those found in the North, but they do require guidance, nurturing and support.

7.5 Regulatory framework

The examples covered in this section illustrate different kinds of motivation of the private sector in taking part in development initiatives: altruism, profitability, building new markets, political credibility, and so on. For many years there has been much interest in and debate about the role of corporate social responsibility in this.[58] Small and large enterprises do, of course, acknowledge to a degree that their responsibilities extend beyond their owners and shareholders. As we have seen, however, in relation to development work their participation has so far been low key.

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[57] http://www.researchintouse.com/programmes/riu-tanzania/riu-tz43innov-infocomms.html

[58] For a snapshot of the issues and references to published work see
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility

A business case, albeit contested, can be made for corporate responsibility but efforts to enshrine the notion in national and international regulations, for example through company reporting requirements, have been patchy. The UN Global Compact and the Global Reporting Initiative provide as framework, and some countries have followed suit. The UK Companies Act 2006 for example requires quoted companies to report on "social and community issues, including information about any policies of the company in relation to those matters and the effectiveness of those policies" and to acknowledge if they do not report against this requirement. In 2009, the Danish government introduced statutory requirements requiring large companies to report on their social responsibility policies and how these translate into action and what has been achieved and, again, "if the business has not formulated any social responsibility policies, this must be reported".

The potential impact of such regulatory approaches will take some time to show through. As we have seen, also, those relatively small companies that have entered the research communication market probably fall outside such reporting requirements.

7.6 Key observations

- Small, lively companies can make an active, integrated impact on the effectiveness of communication programmes, as they are agile and adaptable and often have valuable local knowledge.

- Larger companies have the resources to make more substantial contributions, in money or in kind, and may also offer management resources not available to smaller organisations.

- Commercial companies are principally motivated by their commercial interests when they undertake projects. To engage them in research communication work it is essential to address these motivations and convince managements that support of programmes can be of direct and longer term benefit to them.

- Altruism and commercial good sense need not be in conflict: altruism on an affordable scale can open the doors to future returns for companies.

- The developing world itself provides fertile ground for partnerships with the private sector, with companies being perhaps more flexible in their business models than those from the developed world.

- There is a continuing need for, and benefit to be had from providing online or other opportunities for potential partners to show their wares and services and make direct contact.

- Communication organisations need to offer proactive guidance, nurturing and support of potential partnerships with the private sector.

- Corporate responsibility has a potential role to play in attracting the private sector, but it is less clear whether further progress will come more through social pressure than regulation.

8 The potential of ICT

ICT covers a wide and rapidly growing opportunity for research communication. ICT is a term used to describe any technology which stores, finds, receives, or shares information in a digital format. This includes the traditional use of computer-based technologies and emails, and the more recent growth of digital communication technologies such as mobile phones, SMS, and social networking. New ICTs provide many opportunities for information to be handled and presented differently and more cheaply than in the past. These technologies provide various avenues for researchers and communication officers to communicate their findings and information services more directly to their users.

The routine use of ICTs impacts on all the research organisations involved in this study. This section focuses on some of the approaches being used.

8.1 Background

The use of information technologies is changing fast, becoming more interactive and enabling more opportunities for dialogue, discussion and feedback. The poor, though still seriously disadvantaged, now have more opportunities to add their voices to public opinion, particularly through the use of mobile phones. Of the three billion phones in use around the world, two billion are now mobile phones.

The potential for using text messaging, mobile phones and emails for low cost and effective communication has already proven a powerful means of raising awareness on topical news issues (such as the Burmese uprising). Such technologies can increase the impact of information as a channel for influencing research and advocating for policy changes by harnessing public awareness and response. Some development researchers are turning to social networks to communicate their messages strategically. There are also developing, but as yet little researched, ICT opportunities, such as blogs, twitter, social networking sites such as Facebook and the use of Youtube for video communication.

Although some Southern countries have substantial technological bases, strong and proven institutions and well-developed human resources, others are at the early stages of adopting ICT and are eager to participate in the burgeoning knowledge society. Pan Asia (part of IDRC's ICT4D programme) notes that in rural Asia there are over 3 billion people without any form of connectivity. Considerable improvements in connectivity, while creating new opportunities for economic growth and social development, particularly in urban areas, have much less penetration in rural areas. The majority of rural Asians today do not have access to basic telephony, let alone the internet. Moreover, South Asia, home to 50% of the world's poor, has more people who do not have access to the internet or telephony than the rest of the world combined.

8.2 Computers and the internet

The world's first computers were developed in the US under military funded research work in the 1960s with the first personal computers becoming available in 1975, followed by the World Wide Web, developed by European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) in 1989.[59] Personal computers became widely available and affordable in much of the North in the mid 1980s. Their distribution and usage moved rapidly from office to home. Internet usage surged during the 1990s, and today 1.8 billion people around the world are connected (26.6%)[60] with 8.7% of Africans and 20% of Asians having access to the internet (though rarely through personal ownership).

However, the digital divide between North and South is still considerable. In 2008 58.1% of households in Europe had internet access, compared with 16.8% in Asia and 2.5% in Africa[61]. In addition, internet connectivity, whilst available, may be far from satisfactory in many countries due to power fluctuations, cost and bandwidth availability. All members of the Research Communication consortia focus on helping to bridge this divide through a variety of approaches, including building capacity, sharing resources, facilitating low bandwidth access to websites and sharing documents via email (which is often more readily accessible than web-based repositories).

Established in 2008, the global CIARD initiative has the vision to make public domain agricultural research information and knowledge truly accessible to all. FAO is one of 15 partner organisations within CIARD, which seeks to develop effective and coherent institutional approaches to sharing agricultural science and technology information within a partnership initiative. However, CIARD is not just about technology; the initiative also addresses the way that technologies are used. This includes building and improving information systems, empowering the institutions and people using them, and opening access to the content. CIARD encourages each institution to interconnect and work together in ways that complement each other. CIARD emphasizes the need to respect the roles of national, regional and international institutions. Aligning local efforts in different countries in this way results in global impact, leveraging existing resources to change the way that knowledge changes hands and gets used worldwide.

Agreeing international standards that facilitate the global sharing of digital information is key for the CIARD initiative.

Five CIARD consultations were held (in Accra, Hyderabad, Santiago, Cairo and Moscow) for participants from international agricultural research stations. They considered a draft checklist of good practice for developing institutional readiness, managing digital

[59] Human Development Report, UNDP 2002

[60] World Internet Usage Statistics 2009

[61] International Telecommunication Union 2009 statistics

content, licensing and opening up content, and disseminating it. Finally a set of CIARD 'Pathways' were introduced to provide guidance for institutions to meet the good practice guidance. The consultations produced an overwhelming endorsement of the basic advocacy platform for CIARD.

KAINet, the Kenya based information system, had a considerable focus on specialist ICT training for staff in the digitisation and management of information, backed up by the provision of ICT equipment to enable the upgrading of existing databases and the provision of shared information repositories (now with 35,000 metadata records and 1,500 full-text documents) in the five member institutions accessible through the KAINet website (www.kainet.or.ke). Its experience has been that participating scientists increasingly see real benefits and visibility arising through the sharing of their outputs.

Acacia (part of the ICT4D programme) carried out a study within eight universities in seven Southern African countries and found that despite a lack of capacity to make research available online, there were high levels of awareness and support of open access approaches (with 80% of researchers and 50% of deans supporting this).

8.3 Web connectivity

Many Southern researchers have major problems in accessing the internet, ranging from electricity outages, lack of broadband, erratic connectivity, high costs, to lengthy download times for larger documents. E-journals and web portals can facilitate low bandwidth access and adapt massive documents to help improve access. E-communications with attached papers, may have a wider reach to researchers with poor web connectivity.

The provision of web portals is common to most of the organisations that are the focus of this study. For some, such as GDNet, R4D and SciDev, it is their key service provision with an emphasis on accessibility and ease of usage. Organisations such as INASP have worked hard to ensure their work takes into account the limited broadband access available in many Southern countries.

To facilitate their work with AJOL, INASP and their partners have developed software providing a sophisticated but low-cost and low-bandwidth website. This enabled AJOL to be transferred and managed by a not-for-profit trust in South Africa and the Asian JOL to develop individual country sites in Vietnam (VJOL), Nepal (NepJOL), Bangladesh (BanglaJOL), Philippines (PhilJOL) and Sri Lanka (SLJOL), which were then combined into a search portal called AsiaJOL. The physical hosting of each website depends on the availability of suitable power and bandwidth conditions in the country. The visibility of the research on the JOLs was further enhanced when INASP entered into an agreement with CrossRef to allow all articles published on the JOLs to have digital object identifiers (DOIs) assigned to them.

To help editors to improve the quality of their journals and train them in using an online peer-review system, INASP developed a series of in-country workshops that have become an important part of the JOL concept. The first workshop usually discusses the issues of online publishing, and then editors are encouraged to create their own online strategies and promotion plans. The second workshop is usually held after a country JOL has been established and addresses some of the production quality issues, but mainly focuses on training the editors to load their own content onto the website. The third workshop brings together the same editors to discuss the functions of an editorial office and goes through the full online peer-review process using the JOL website.

The Fantsuam Foundation project in Nigeria, supported by Acacia under the ICT4D programme, has helped communities to design, implement and maintain ICT wireless networks and use them for development purposes. Their Wireless Distribution Network has been acknowledged by the Government of Nigeria (Telecommunication Regulator), as the first rural Wireless Internet Service Provider (ISP) in the country. Despite the provision of good training for staff and communities, they find staff turnover a considerable problem, illustrating the high demand for such services elsewhere in the country.

FAO supports the Research4Life programmes to improve the uptake and use of the international scientific literature through AGORA (Access to Global Online Research on Agriculture), HINARI (Health InterNetwork Access to Research Initiative) and OARE (Online Access to Research in the Environment). This is being achieved through promotion, training and enhancements to the programmes' websites to facilitate document discovery and retrieval, especially for users with poor Internet connectivity. Research4Life is providing access to more than 7,000 journals and periodicals from more than 150 publishers to over 8,000 institutions in 109 countries.

IMARK is an e-learning initiative in agricultural information management developed by FAO and partner organizations. FAO is one of the collaborators. IMARK is a partnership-based e-learning initiative to train individuals and support institutions and networks world-wide in the effective management of agricultural information. It consists of a suite of distance learning resources, tools and communities on information management. The learning materials are developed as a series of modules available both online and on CD-ROM. The modules use the latest methods in e-learning, providing an interactive environment for self-paced learning. For example, the latest module is called Web 2.0 and Social Media for Development and illustrates how organisations can benefit from the opportunities provided by the Web 2.0 and social media to strengthen collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Over 50,000 information intermediaries worldwide have used the various IMARK modules, now spanning six major topic areas in up to six languages.

Podcasts (or webcasts) enable the online storage of digital media files, both audio and video. AGFAX use podcasts to share audio highlights from each monthly set of radio scripts, so that radio stations can broadcast these directly.

Regular e-communication and e-mailing lists enable wide low cost distribution, not just of research papers, but of articles and learning materials based on research findings. For example, AGFAX, WRENmedia's radio broadcast support service, uses an email notification service for over 2,000 readers to inform them of each monthly information pack.

SciDev.Net sends out a weekly email alert. This has inspired one user, Dr Sarath Abayawardana, the Director of Sri Lanka's National Science Foundation (NSF), to create an e-newsletter, "ScinnoTech Alert". A team of young scientific officers within the NSF compiles the newsletter and circulates it to about 2500 scientists and other professionals within Sri Lanka. The plan is to make it a regular monthly feature. Abayawardana is fully aware of the benefits that come from encouraging the exchange of scientific information. Thanks to regular information from SciDev.Net, the e-newsletter is helping to introduce such a culture in Sri Lanka.

RSS feeds first became widely available in 2005 and enable users to sign up for automatic updates on specified topics. In addition, they enable service providers to use automatic tracking systems to determine reader interests and usage. AGFAX, SciDev.Net, InfoDev (the Information for Development Program of the World Bank) and R4D are among organisations with websites that encourage users to sign up for RSS feeds for specific information updates. These on-line delivery mechanisms harness the use of automated emails to either send out regular updates with links to new information or enable users to set up their own RSS preferences so that they automatically receive new information on selected topics.

8.4 Impact of mobile phones

There has been an "explosive growth of mobile telephony in many developing countries," comments a recent report from SIDA.[62] "Mobile phones are now the primary form of telecommunication in developing countries." The report goes on to comment that "In developing countries a generation of people have grown up without computers and their creative energies have instead been focused on using mobile phones for communication, information, and more recently access to a range of services from m-Banking to m-Education and m-Governance".

The growth of the mobile phone market in the South in recent years is a phenomenal success story. Tens of millions of the world's poorest people now own or have access to a mobile phone. In 2009, mobile phone subscriptions in the South grew by 58%.[63] Subscribers ignore expensive and often unreliable landlines. The ease of establishing

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[62] The innovative use of mobile applications in the Philippines – Lessons for Africa by Shawn Mendes, Erwin Alampay, Edwin Soriano and Cheryll Soriano. September 2007. SIDA

[63] International Telecommunication Union 2009 statistics

mobile phone base towers, liberalised markets and the ready availability of pre-paid mobile phone cards have facilitated an extraordinary growth rate around the world. In 2003, 39% of the world's population was not covered by a mobile cellular signal, but by 2009 this had reduced to 10%.[64] Almost total coverage is anticipated by 2015, a target agreed by the Geneva Plan of Action at the World Summit on the Information Society in 2003.[65] And for citizens unable to buy their own mobile, phone kiosks provide cheap access and a steady income for those who set them up.

LIRNEasia (part of the ICT4D programme) researched the role of information and the use of mobile phones in the agricultural cycle in Sri Lanka – including crop choice, growth, harvest and sale. The study uncovered startling evidence about the significant role played by information in reducing transaction costs – notably 15% of costs incurred by farmers in all stages of the agricultural cycle are information-related transaction costs. The study pointed to the indirect relationship between increased use of mobile phones and reduced transaction costs.

8.5 Messaging services

Mobile applications such as text services, roaming and mobile broadband continue to develop. A recent report by InfoDev[66] found that the use of mobile communications in developing countries has the potential to bring a range of financial services to previously excluded groups. In the Philippines, known for its intensive and widespread use of SMS, mobile-enabled financial services (m-Banking) enables 3.5 million people to carry out financial transactions and send remittances both nationally and internationally, without the risks of using cash over the two major mobile networks, operated by SMART Communications and Globe Telecom. This also benefits mobile operators, the banks and retailers.

Micro-finance institutions value their ability to advance funds into remote areas and benefit from regular repayments that do not inconvenience their users.

In Brazil, large banks use point-of-sale terminals at retail outlets across the country to deliver bill payments, savings, credit, insurance, and money transfer products to nearly 10 million customers previously without access to bank accounts.

Mediae's SMS initiative enables viewers to ask questions and request further information about the issues raised in programmes. Makutano Junction viewers are

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[64] International Telecommunication Union 2009 statistics

[65] World Telecommunication/ICT Development Report 2010. Monitoring the WSIS targets; A mid term review.

[66] InfoDev. Expanding Financial Services to the Poor: The Role of ICT. Report from a Joint infoDev and CGAP Workshop, June 2006b. http://www.infodev.org/en/Publication.171.html

given details of how to text in after each programme; sharing their views, requesting information leaflets and asking questions.

The government of Kenya used messaging services as part of a drive to train new primary school teachers in 2003–04 through distance learning.[67] The use of SMS to share information was well accepted by the teachers involved. It was used to deliver study guide material, regular support and encouragement, teaching tips, reminders for assessments or meetings and to encourage feedback. Such application of messaging services to specific groupings offers real potential as a means of sharing information and encouraging feedback and further enquiries.

8.6 Online conferencing

Workshops and conferences bring considerable social benefits and enhance networking and relationship building, in addition to the learning they share. However, they are costly in terms of organisation, staff time, travel costs, carbon impact (if international or regional) and accommodation. Whilst unlikely to fully replace the benefits of face-to-face meetings, online conferencing via software applications such as Skype provides a low-cost and accessible alternative for meetings, training, networking and discussion forums.

SjCOOP (a journalist training initiative of WFSJ) has made extensive and innovative use of ICT applications both in placing its course in science journalism online, and in facilitating the networking of trainee science journalists and their mentors largely through Skypechats and Skypecasts. This approach has not only brought considerable benefits to the quality of science-based reporting, but the use of ICT applications makes it easily replicable at low cost elsewhere in the world.

Relay encouraged the formation of a coalition of journalists, civil society representatives and researchers to form following its Naivasha workshop in 2009[68]. Online conferencing is one way of helping to maintain the relationship's understanding and trust built during the workshop, resulting in the effective sharing of contacts, information and links.

8.7 Using ICT for education and training

E-learning requires a different mindset to the more traditional face-to-face methods of sharing information and training, and offers considerable potential. More research on the use of ICT in education in the South is certainly needed. Acacia (case study 4) supported by IDRC, sees a niche in supporting research that contributes to a better

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[67] Kukulska-Hulme A and Traxler J, Eds (2005). Mobile Learning: A Handbook for Educators and Trainers, Routledge, London

[68] Draft case study: Ingrid Yngstrom (2010).The role of the media in good governance: A case study from Kenya on generating media debate on tax, governance and accountability. Relay, Panos London

understanding of the educational uses of ICTs in the socio-cultural context of Africa, research that produces evidence that can inform the main stakeholders (such as policy makers, practitioners, researchers, parents and students) and that promotes the formulation and implementation of policies and reforms supporting the introduction of ICT in the educational systems.

The research questions they are focusing on include:

- which policies and strategies can most effectively support embedded and systemic ICT practices in education;

- what is the impact of ICTs on student and teacher knowledge, skills and attitudes, and what are the appropriate indicators for evaluating them;

- what are the most appropriate partnerships/alliances (including public-private ones) to develop for the maintenance, operation, and financial viability of ICT-based education programs; and

- how can ICTs enhance or detract from the teacher-pupil learning and communication process?

8.8 Facilitating more uptake of ICT

The weak ICT infrastructure available to users in the South as well as high costs, social and institutional barriers, language barriers, issues of format all represent real constraints on the access, use and uptake of research information.

The innovative use of ICT in mainstream development sectors is being researched, adopted and scaled against the background of rapidly developing communication technology. Researchers, research institutions and research networks in Africa and Asia now have increased capacity to share and generate new knowledge on ICT platforms with wider potential application for poverty reduction. The wide-scale adoption of common international standards and norms, such as those promoted by INASP, CIARD and IMARK will facilitate the sharing of digital research outputs.

Increasingly flexible and responsive ICT can mean that discussion on topical research issues by users within the media, CSOs or NGOs, for example, can lead to advocacy initiatives more rapidly and effectively than in the past with conventional forms of mass communication. Public concern over specific topics can sometimes result in rapid and sometimes far-reaching changes in practice and policy – through, for example, email campaigning, text messaging or statistical usage of government web sites offering specific information.

CommGAP has included new media approaches, in particular its blog, within its capacity building program. Its blog – People, Spaces, Deliberation – has a wide coverage with more than 85,000 visits during the first quarter of 2010.

Resourcing and supporting small initiatives and their use of ICT may prove beneficial in encouraging innovation, which is often easier within smaller contexts than within larger organisations. Pan Asia helps facilitate the Information Society Innovation Fund (ISIF).

The first round of its competitive small grants programme approved 11 projects from Vietnam, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Thailand, India and the Philippines, which explored topics such as:

- mobile application development in healthcare;

- the use of WiMAX technologies to access the Internet via television broadcasting infrastructure;

- bandwidth maximizing technology;

- and health emergency; and

- disaster management systems using mobile and virtual earth technology.

8.9 Summary

Innovations in ICT are developing and changing rapidly, with new possibilities for sharing of research information continuing to develop. Amongst the research communication consortia, innovative and often low-cost approaches are certainly evident, and networking opportunities can help share such learning. The website New Agriculturist is considering greater use of Web 2.0 tools, including Twitter and Facebook to raise its profile.

Technologies developed for one purpose also have a habit of sparking off new possibilities elsewhere. For example, mobile phones, developed as a more flexible means of keeping in touch by phone, are now used more for SMS and have enabled millions, particularly in the South, to use them as a means of trading goods and for banking. Other ICTs are also likely to develop in initially unforeseen ways. The potential use of ICT in sharing research communication is considerable.

8.10 Key observations

- ICT offers massive potential in the dissemination of research findings in a fast changing exciting world.

- The newer ICT developments such as wikis, social networking sites, Web 2.0 tools and video sharing sites all offer considerable potential for researchers and communicators in raising issues, discussing learning and enhancing user involvement.

- Creating regular space and time for staff learning about new ICT and new media possibilities and current trends in usage, will increase the likelihood of adapting their potential into existing work with resultant cost saving and enhancement of user access and response.

- Support, resource and monitor small-scale innovations.

- Support research into the use of ICT in online training and education.

- The initial setup costs of establishing video or other online conferencing facilities may easily be outweighed by savings in travel (particularly when this is international), accommodation and facilitation costs together with staff time, involved in face-to-face conferences and meetings.

9 Conclusions and issues for discussion

Here we summarise the main conclusions from the preceding sections, and outline possible areas for further discussion. Many helpful and positive points have come from the case studies, demonstrating that the impact of effective research communication can be significant. Sharing lessons from effective communication methodologies in this way may encourage further innovation in this fast developing and important field. The conclusions and discussion points are grouped under the same five themes mentioned in the introduction. They are themes that have been identified as priority areas of activity for DFID.

9.1 Research on communication

Given the wide range of information sources and influences on user groups, robust research into research communication itself is challenging to carry out, but is very important. One of the most prominent issues is how to attribute particular changes to the causal effect of particular communication initiatives, whether in focused examples such as Mediae's user research or CommGAP's broader democracy and governance projects.

There is potential for more innovative work in this area to add to that that of organisations such as Acacia and Mediae Trust. For example, there is scope for further investigation into how research findings actually influence policy and into the role of intermediaries in this area,.

Developing effective skills in science communication is a long-term process, particularly in countries where modern science is not an embedded component of national culture. Financial sustainability of intervention programmes therefore needs to be a priority.

The role of the media in achieving real impact in research communication is a priority area for a number of research communication consortia members, and is one where innovative approaches by WFSJ, BBC World Service Trust, Relay and Mediae are bearing fruit. New media, and particularly Web 2.0 approaches, also provide innovative opportunities for research communicators to target end users directly. There is rapid development in accessible communication technologies which have the potential for wider application.

Increasingly, information is recorded digitally, so electronic repositories play an important role in ensuring access is maintained over time: the management of data in the digital age will be an important area of debate. In traditional academic research publishing, the issues of preservation and continued access have begun to be addressed by national and university libraries and others; more needs to be done in the field of broader research communication.

There is a case for further research on the balance of resources required for research communication, on who provides them and where along the communication chain, the way they are applied most cost effectively and the value for money they represent in the context of the total development effort.

9.2 Supporting researchers to communicate

Researchers who make the challenging decision to engage with users early, strategically and imaginatively, may be surprised by the positive results. In addition to success within the academic field, the opportunity to share findings in the form of articles for web portals, press releases for the media or opportunities to present findings in conferences and workshop, brings satisfaction, increased impact and also enhances feedback.

To enable researchers to have a significant impact on poverty, there needs to be a wider appreciation of the context they work within and the pressures they experience in producing robust research findings, so that they gain both sufficient support and understanding and the necessary skills to equip them as effective research communicators.

Research communication is a skilled activity addressing a range of audiences from policy makers to end users. The role of the researcher therefore needs to be complemented by the contribution of communication professionals. Skills and abilities to interpret complex findings and translate them into usable information for non-expert users without over simplification and 'dumbing down', are essential for researchers, journalists, intermediaries and CSOs.

For effective communication there is a need to build working coalitions based on relationships of trust between those generating and those communicating research.

Communicators need to understand that timing is key to influencing policy makers. Researchers and CSOs tend to communicate when they have findings ready to share and at their convenience, but findings that relate to policy makers have to be communicated when they are ready and willing to listen.

9.3 Communication of research

Knowledge is power. The ability to communicate research findings should be regarded as a public good on a level with the public good represented by knowledge itself.

Making the funding of research communication a headline commitment through the DFID 10% rule has been helpful to the overall objective of applying research results more effectively. In practice, spending by some organisations has exceeded this level,

and there are calls for the mandatory proportion of spend on research communication to be increased even more (for example in the Hovland review69).

These case studies reveal the complex, nonlinear processes involved in research communication, with much of the activity being innovative and experimental. There is no 'one size fits all' process that can be followed. Contexts differ and research findings are targeted at very different user groups. Methods of communication therefore need to be adapted to the target audience.

The growing role of intermediaries is not simply that of the one-way dissemination of research outputs; it must foster a two-way or multi faceted dialogue between the various stakeholders and support the whole research cycle.

Intermediaries require the skills to understand complex research findings, to assess their significance against existing knowledge and to 'package' the findings in order to reach the appropriate targets. They not only 'process' new research findings but also enable users to assess their value alongside existing knowledge through the provision of easily accessible digital databases and repositories.

Policy makers are a key group of actors whose engagement is crucial to ensuring an enabling policy and institutional environment that promotes and sustains strengthened research communication.

9.4 Facilitation of research uptake and enabling environment

Southern organisations work in a more challenging technological context, experiencing difficulties such as the cost and availability of equipment, communication costs and lack of broadband internet access.

Networking South-to-South researchers can bring many benefits and facilitates learning, information sharing and reflection and sharing regional initiatives which have potential application elsewhere.

Partnerships have benefits such as joint planning, rationalising of resources and sharing of skills. If these are embedded in an institutional framework, it can add credibility to a project, so that it is seen as one that enhances other work already being undertaken in the institutions concerned.

Current approaches to research communication continue to be essentially the push-provision of knowledge. Demand-driven pull-approaches remain in their infancy. The questions the researcher seeks to investigate and answer should be the questions that users want answered. Communicating research findings that users see as irrelevant to

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[69]http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/PDF/Outputs/Communication/Review_of_DFID_ResearchTenPercent_policy_research_communication_June09.pdf

their needs is very hard. Communicating findings seen as relevant and timely brings much greater impact.

Communication can be impeded by linguistic and technological barriers, resource limitations, cultural norms such as gender, expectations, lack of confidence and lack of a sense of entitlement. Research communication initiatives need to understand and adapt their methods to these local contexts.

The uptake of research communication, particularly applied to policy process, is likely to be more effective in democracies. However, much development work is happening in regions of potential political instability or armed conflict. While funders and aid agencies are acutely aware of these constraints, their impact on research communication is rarely brought to the surface.

There is a need for investment with a longer reach, allowing infrastructures, disciplines and local experts to be embedded, as well as more devolution of resources for and control of research communication initiatives to the local level where much expertise resides.

There is much scope for engaging the private sector in research communication work. The developing world itself provides fertile ground for partnerships with the private sector, with companies being perhaps more flexible in their business models than those from the developed world.

9.5 Knowledge management and lessons learned

Project leaders are conscious of the need for internal and external feedback on achievements and use those methods best suited to their particular project. Formal methodological tools such as logframes are used widely and are beneficial particularly for complex projects, in that they help project design, clarify purpose and expected outcomes and facilitate evaluation.

The logframe approach alone does not suit all research communication programmes. There is room for experimentation and research communication practitioners have successfully used a variety of monitoring and evaluation tools that are less formal but no less rigorous in their aim to demonstrate value for money.

Joint agreements to clarify monitoring and evaluation requirements and appropriate templates would be welcomed.

To be fully effective, monitoring and evaluation should be integrated into programmes from the start; post-hoc assessment may not answer the right questions. Understanding the target audience at the outset of research communication, with tools such as stakeholder analysis and baseline surveys, is key to robustly assessing the impact of research uptake.

The problem of attributing a particular outcome to a specific intervention, except in the simplest of cases, is a real one. Environmental contexts are usually complex and running experiments with control groups is normally not possible.

It is difficult to demonstrate the effectiveness of communication programmes in their entirety, as many projects are experimental, and impact data aggregated over many projects or programmes are not yet available.

9.6 Key messages

Knowledge is power. The ability to communicate development research findings should be regarded as a public good on a level with the public good represented by knowledge itself.

Skills and abilities to interpret complex research findings and translate them into usable information for non-expert users are essential for researchers, journalists, editors, intermediaries and CSOs. Effective communication needs relationships of understanding and trust between all these stakeholders – both those generating and those communicating research.

Effective research communication will validate research questions at the outset of the research cycle through improved understanding of the context and needs of stakeholders, with tools such as stakeholder analysis and baseline surveys, rather than attempting to validate the findings. This will also strengthen assessment of the impact of research uptake.

Communication can be impeded by linguistic and technological barriers, resource limitations, cultural norms such as gender, expectations, lack of confidence and lack of a sense of entitlement. The local context and the views of users should determine which messages, methods and approaches are selected to communicate research findings. There is no 'one size fits all' approach.

Fast changing information communication technologies offer considerable potential for innovation in improving access for, and in communicating research to, a wider audience.

Well resourced and accessible research communication provides an enabling environment for all stakeholders involved in working towards poverty reduction.

For maximum impact in influencing policy makers, research communication needs to be timely; targeting specific conferences, campaigns, UN dates or governmental green discussion papers.

There is much work to be done to develop widely agreed definitions and tools for assessing research uptake and impact during monitoring and evaluation, with attribution of effect to cause being one of the more taxing challenges.

Annex 1: Programmes currently funded by DFID's Research and Evidence Division

The following 17 organisations and programmes are currently funded by DFID under its Research and Evidence Division:

BBC World Service Trust, Policy & Research programme on the role of Media and Communication in Development, UK www.africatalksclimate.com

CABI, UK http://www.cabi.org/

Communication for Governance and Accountability (CommGap) programme, World Bank, USA
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/Governanceweb.pdf

FAO, Information Systems in Agriculture Science and Technology, Italy www.ciard.net www.kainet.or.ke

GDNet programme, Global Development Network, Egypt www.gdnet.org

Infodev programme, World Bank, USA http://www.infodev.org//en/Page.About.html

Information Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) programme, IDRC, Canada http://www.idrc.ca/

Inter Press Service News, Changing Lives: Making Research Real programme, South Africa http://ipsnews.net/new_focus/changelives/index.asp

Makutano Junction (TV programme), Mediae Company, Kenya www.mediae.org

Managing Knowledge for Development - MK4D (includes specific gender knowledge service BRIDGE), IDS, UK http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/mk4d

Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERii), INASP, UK www.inasp.info/perii

Relay - Communicating Research through the Media programme, Panos, UK http://www.Panos.org.uk/relay

Research for Development (R4D) http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D

The Science & Development Network (SciDev.Net), UK http://www.scidev.net/en/content/overview/

Supporting Science Journalism in the Developing World (SjCOOP), World Federation of Science Journalists, Canada http://www.wfsj.org/files/file/projects/SjCOOP_Technical_Report.pdf

UK Collaborative on Development Sciences (UKCDS), UK http://www.ukcds.org.uk/

WRENmedia, Communicating Research: Contributing to Sustainable Development (AGFAX and New Agriculturist). www.wrenmedia.co.uk

Annex 2: Case studies

Case study 1: BBC World Service Trust

BBC World Service Trust - Africa Talks Climate: The public understanding of climate change in ten countries

Africa Talks Climate (ATC), a research and communication initiative run by the BBC World Service Trust and supported by the British Council, aimed to assess the public understanding of climate change across ten countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

African citizens are least responsible for climate change and will be among the most affected. Yet according to this research, they are poorly informed about the issue and are already struggling with the challenges posed by a changing climate. African voices are also too often absent from national and international climate debate. ATC sought to understand how media and communication could be used to best support Africans' response to these challenges.

ATC took a qualitative research approach, featuring discussions with over 1,000 citizens and 200 opinion leaders in 10 countries. A comprehensive communication strategy was developed alongside research activities to engage at national, regional and international levels throughout 2009-10.

The research asked four main questions:

1. What changes have African citizens experienced in their climate and environment over time?
2. How do African citizens explain and respond to these changes?
3. What do African citizens know and understand about global climate change?
4. What do African opinion leaders know and understand about climate change, and what are their views on their country's responses to climate change?

Research findings

African citizens are the least responsible for generating the greenhouse gases that are contributing to global climate change. Yet this research reveals that Africans are already struggling with challenges posed by a changing climate.

"There is nothing we can do. We just wait for the rain... we will wait for the rain to plant." Woman from Debay Tilat Gin, Ethiopia

People report less predictable seasons (particularly the loss of distinct rainy seasons), increases in temperature and more frequent and intense droughts and floods. They are also very aware of environmental degradation. Many people in rural areas speak of migration as the only viable option to respond to their changing climate. There is little

awareness that the climatic problems facing Africa – now or in the future – are likely to have causes that extend beyond their own continent.

"When it does rain now, it rains too much," says a woman from Soroti, Uganda. "It destroys crops and they do not grow properly and so hunger comes up."

Reach and Impact

The involvement of high-profile figures ensured findings were delivered to over 60 national and international journalists at a regional launch in Nairobi, Kenya. Professor Maathai spoke alongside British High Commissioner to Kenya Rob Macaire and the Right Honourable Raila Odinga, Prime Minister of Kenya, who delivered the keynote address:

"We have failed to communicate climate change to our people and we must, and will, do better in the future. Africa Talks Climate has opened my eyes [it is] relevant and significant now", he declared, and further pledged: "We shall launch a major awareness campaign to make sure every citizen knows the consequences of climate change and what each of us has to do to help stop [it]."

Africa Talks Climate findings have already been applied at workshops with senior media practitioners from across Africa; at a climate change session at the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association conference in April 2010, many felt the research resonated with their own experiences.

"We used the ATC research because we felt it was a very different piece of work with a fresh approach. The connection of grassroots and policy is crucial in any media focus, and our participants found it extremely useful and easy to use", said Deputy Secretary-General of the CBA Sally-Ann Wilson.

The importance of an evidence-base for those already working in the field became clear throughout the process. Speaking at the launch event Professor Maathai said "It is extremely important for people to understand [climate change]. As the report indicates, it has often been described as an abstract, scientific subject … it is very important that we communicate in a language that our people understand."

Technical experts and practitioners from across all ten countries were also consulted at each stage of the process, and the research has been extremely well received by this target group. Clément Kitambala, Director of a local adaptation NGO in DRC is typical in saying: "I absolutely agree with the report's conclusion and recommendations. They should inspire donors, government, civil society organisations and churches to carry out activities in communication and information."

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should inspire donors, government, civil society organisations and churches to carry out activities in communication and information."

BBC partnerships

Working closely with BBC Global News Division (weekly audience 241 million) several broadcast partnerships enhanced engagement at key events, specifically in the build-up to the UN climate conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

A partnership with BBC World News (weekly audience, 71 million) produced two editions of The World Debate. A special edition of flagship BBC World Service interactive programme World Have Your Say was also recorded from Copenhagen.

National media and stakeholder interest was maintained through the launch of interim findings in five countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and Uganda) in October 2009.

Climate ambassadors

Key international figures became official ambassadors for the project, ensuring findings were communicated in accessible and innovative ways at the highest level. Senegalese world music star Baaba Maal recorded a special concert and spoke about his personal experiences 'in conversation' with BBC Journalist Stephen Sackur from the Copenhagen talks, broadcast on the BBC World Service.

In the UK, Jonathon Porritt lent his support and voice, as did Kenyan Nobel laureate and environmentalist Professor Wangari Maathai.

Africa Talks Climate was named Climate Change Communicator of the Year in 2010 by the US Center for Climate Change Communication (4C) at George Mason University.

The Africa Talks Climate Research and Communication initiative was funded by the British Council, but the Africa Talks Climate policy briefing and the BBC WST's Research and Learning Group, were supported by the DFID funded Policy and Research Programme on the Role of Media and Communication in Development.

Further information

Policy briefing and individual country reports available at www.africatalksclimate.com

Case Study 2: The World Bank's CommGAP programme

CommGap is a Trust Fund at the World Bank, fully funded by DFID. The global programme promotes the use of communication in governance reform programmes and supports the building of democratic public spheres. Through its three programme areas (Research and Advocacy, Training and Capacity Building, and Support to Development Projects and Programmes), CommGAP is demonstrating the power of communication in promoting good and accountable governance and hence better development results.

Their key strategies focus on:

- good governance;
- public sphere and public opinion; and
- coalition building and multi-stakeholder engagement.

Communication for governance and accountability

CommGAP's framework for strengthening the role of communication in governance reform is based on three major approaches, which all rely on the successful dissemination of knowledge. In consultations and gap analyses undertaken in CommGAP's first year of operation, we identified three gaps in the design and implementation of governance reform initiatives: One gap is at the process level, another is at the structural level, the third is at the capacity level.

Process level: There is increasing awareness that for reform programmes to succeed, reform managers have to confront a broad range of challenges concerning stakeholders, vested interests, coalition building and either hostile or indifferent public opinion. The programme realises this goal through gathering knowledge and expertise from a wide variety of sources, integrating and synthesizing this knowledge, and then providing channels of dissemination so that relevant know-how can reach governance advisors and reform specialists in development.

Structural level: There is insufficient appreciation of the crucial role of the public sphere for securing good governance and accountability. CommGAP aims to heighten understanding of the importance of the public sphere in supporting good governance, both by influencing the policy debate and by improving practice in the field. CommGAP gathers research insights regarding the role of the public sphere and makes it available to a diverse audience in development.

Capacity: Increasing the capacity of researchers, communication practitioners and reform managers in developing countries will help raise the level of their contribution to improving governance. Results from academic research are much-needed by practitioners to improve their work, while the experience of practitioners, in turn, fuels further research.

To fill these three identified gaps, CommGAP is following the PITIA-Strategy: ***Policy Influence, Technical Integration, and Amplification***:

To fill the **structural gap**, *policy influence* is used. Examples of how policy change and influence diffuse from global to country level include experiences in gender mainstreaming, participatory approaches, and climate change.

To fill the **practice gap,** *technical integration* to meet challenges on both the demand and supply sides of governance are developed and integrated.

To fill the **capacity gap, a** *mplification* through knowledge sharing and broadened participation is enabled through existing platforms of learning and multi-level resource mobilisation.

Typically, CommGap's work begins with research at the level of practice. We start by systematically asking governance advisors and reformers about the challenges they face in implementing governance reforms. We then assess how communication and related social sciences can help overcome these challenges.

The next step is to bring together a multi-disciplinary group of experts including leading scholars, researchers, and practitioners from around the world to share the approaches and techniques they have applied with success, pitfalls they have encountered, and lessons they have learned within the global development community. CommGAP helps distill and codify these lessons, and then commissions further research and formal case studies. The lessons are then packaged and disseminated globally in different formats and to different audiences, including:

- theoretical or formal contributions to scholarship in the disciplines of communication and development;
- practical guides, toolkits and handbooks to support reform managers;
- policy and research briefs to help shape the policy debate; and
- training modules for a global learning programme in communication and governance.

Capacity building

CommGAP's flagship course People, Politics and Change: Communication Approaches to Governance Reform has been used on several occasions – with senior government officials and with Training of Trainers programmes.

The course received very good evaluations from participants. The participants commented on the usefulness of bringing together theoretical background and practical exercises as well as the course's participatory approach and opportunities provided for peer-to-peer learning. They also named the acquired skills that they are now ready to apply on the job: stakeholder analysis and effective communication with stakeholders; tools for organizational change; advocacy and winning support for reforms; engaging middle managers; engaging the public and the media; framing issues for problem solution; negotiation and coalition building; development of terms of reference for communication strategy consultants.

The Asian Development Bank asked for a delivery of the course, carried out in February 2010 in Manila.

Successes

With regard to the dissemination of knowledge, CommGAP utilises a wide variety of channels and forms of communication. In addition to the more common forms of publications, CommGAP has been very successful with new media, in particular the blog, and with capacity building. The programme's success is mostly measurable through its influence on World Bank policies and programmes.

From our experience, we suggest that the communication of knowledge is most successful when it is targeted and marketed to specific, identifiable groups, and through a variety of channels. In our case, our target group includes governance advisors in all kinds of institutions as well as political communication experts. We reach different segments of our target group through different channels. This approach 'from all sides' ensures that we reach our audience in development institutions (advocacy), in governments and civil society (capacity building), among practitioners (handbooks and practical guides) and academics (edited volumes).

Further information

The Missing Link - Fostering Positive Citizen-State Relations in Post-Conflict Environments: http://go.worldbank.org/95JFH19QA0

The Role of Media Literacy in the Governance Reform Agenda: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/CommGAPMediaLit.pdf

Adult Learning: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/AdultLearningweb.pdf

Communication for Good Governance: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/Governanceweb.pdf

The role of communication in governance reform:

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/CommGapGovernancePolicyBrief_e.pdf

Media Effects: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/MediaEffectsweb.pdf

The Public Sphere: *http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/PubSphereweb.pdf*

Workshop report:

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/UNODC-CommGAP_CommAndAC_RapporteursReport_FINAL.pdf

Case study 3: FAO, CIARD, KAINet and IMARK

Enhancing more efficient access to agricultural research for development

FAO is collaborating with the ultimate goal of increasing the quality and effectiveness of agricultural science research in low-income countries through enhancing their more efficient access to the outputs of research. The programme has two key objectives

- to improve the uptake and use of the international scientific literature through the three Research4Life programmes. These now provide access to more than 6,000 journals and periodicals from more than 150 publishers to over 7,000 institutions in 107 countries.

- to foster improved availability and accessibility of public domain agricultural research outputs from developing countries for researchers and other stakeholder groups. This is being achieved through (a) establishment and strengthening CIARD (Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research and Development) an international advocacy initiative; (b) establishment of pilot implementations of national agricultural information system in Africa focused on electronic repositories; and (c) development and dissemination of specialised learning resources through the Information management Resource Kit (IMARK).

With the support of funding from DFID, FAO is working to develop the following key strategic principles:

- leverage of resources through mutually beneficial partnerships with key institutional actors leads to coherence and greater effectiveness of interventions in support of research communication;

- strong enabling strategies and policies supported by institutional management and researchers provide the necessary environment for effective access to research outputs; and

- widescale adoption of common international standards and norms facilitates sharing of digital research outputs.

Coherence in Information for Agricultural Research and Development (CIARD)

The fact that most public science and technology information is not easily or widely accessible limits the impact that research can have on agricultural and rural development. But this does not have to be the case. Established in 2008, the global CIARD initiative has the vision to make public domain agricultural research information and knowledge truly accessible to all. It is a partnership-based initiative seeking to develop collectively effective and coherent institutional approaches to sharing agricultural science and technology information. However, CIARD is not just about technology; the initiative also addresses the way that technologies are used. This includes building and improving information systems, empowering the institutions and

people using them, and opening access to the content. CIARD encourages each institution to interconnect and work together in ways that complement each other. Aligning local efforts in different countries in this way results in global impact, changing the way that knowledge changes hands and gets used worldwide.

CIARD was founded by 15 international and regional organisations involved in generating and disseminating agricultural research that have largely contributed to CIARD using their own resources. This self-sufficient approach will help to ensure long term sustainability.

To encourage wider ownership, five consultations were held (in Accra, Hyderabad, Santiago, Cairo and Moscow) to bring together potential CIARD advocates to share learning and views on the CIARD manifesto and values and the main communication materials. Participants were asked to provide guidance on how to gather institutional support and generate evidence of relevant outcomes. The CIARD manifesto and associated values, set out the policy agenda for institutional managers. The participants considered a draft checklist of good practice for developing institutional readiness, managing digital content, licensing and opening up content, and disseminating it. Finally a set of CIARD 'Pathways' were introduced to provide guidance for institutions to meet the good practice guidance. The consultations proved very successful and produced an overwhelming endorsement of the basic advocacy platform for CIARD.

Kenya Agricultural Information Network – KAINet

KAINet (initiated in April 2006) provides a positive illustration of the application of the CIARD framework. Five institutions in Kenya have created a shared open repository of the outputs of agricultural research through a collaborative partnership named the Kenya Agricultural Information Network (KAINet).

The main stakeholders in the first phase of KAINet are five leading national institutions: Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Kenya National Agricultural Research Laboratories (KARI-NARL), Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT).

Capacity building

Training in ICM skills and equipment were provided to 55 staff in digitising and managing information. Participatory workshops were held to raise awareness of the initiative and gain commitment at all levels.

Monitoring and evaluation training was organised for top and middle managers responsible for information management, to build competences in:

- identifying and planning development projects;
- designing and implementing systems for monitoring and evaluation of projects; and
- ensuring efficient and effective project management.

The ICT equipment provided to the institutions facilitated digitisation and the establishment of repositories. Existing databases were reviewed and upgraded, and enhancements made to information management tools and methodologies.

Progress and achievements

The national repository of Agricultural Science and Technology Information is now accessible through the KAINet website (www.kainet.or.ke). In addition, repositories of the five KAINet member institutions include 1,500 full-text documents generated by the institutions, with 35,000 metadata records that conform to international coherence standards to facilitate access and sharing. Three of the five centres are successfully exporting content to FAO's global public domain AGRIS database, further increasing the international accessibility of Kenyan research outputs.

Other benefits included a positive change in attitude from users of the library information services, and the improved visibility of scientists who gradually came to appreciate the benefits of sharing their outputs.

"This KAINet partnership is creating the synergy that will foster the free flow of information from its generation, harvesting, proper storage, and sharing, to make sure the information is used to better the quality of our agriculture and the livelihoods that are derived from agriculture. This network will be a tool to enhance the quality of our policy decisions and our policy initiatives". Hon. William Ruto, Minister of Agriculture, speaking at the official launch of KAINET

Information management Resource Kit (IMARK).

IMARK is a partnership-based e-learning initiative, developed by FAO and partner organisations, to train individuals and support institutions and networks worldwide in the effective management of agricultural information. IMARK consists of a suite of distance learning resources, tools and communities on information management. The learning materials are developed as a series of modules that are available both online and on CD-ROM. The modules use the latest methods in e-learning, providing an interactive environment for self-paced learning. For example, their latest module is called Web 2.0 and Social Media for Development and illustrates how organizations can benefit from the opportunities provided by the Web 2.0 and social media to strengthen collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Over 50,000 information intermediaries worldwide have used the various IMARK modules, now spanning six major topic areas in up to six languages.

Further information

The AGORA website: www.aginternetwork.org

The CIARD website: www.ciard.net

The IMARK website: www.imarkgroup.org

KAINet website: www.kainet.or.ke

Case study 4: GDNet

Global Development Net (GDNet) – a Knowledge hub

GDNet is the research communication component of GDN – the Global Development Network (www.gdnet.org), a small, independent international organisation that allies researchers and institutes working on development globally.

GDNet has been operating since 2001, providing online knowledge services, with some capacity building on knowledge management. GDN aims to support researchers in developing and transition countries to generate and share applied social science research to advance social and economic development. In its Mission statement GDN describes itself as:

"a knowledge hub that brings together and communicates policy-relevant research from the Global South. It aims to be an internationally recognized focal point / knowledge broker for development research to inform policy debate. GDNet is a partnership with regional networks and leading experts in the field. It provides access to on-line journals and data, synthesizes and communicates Southern research, and strengthens research communication capacity."

GDNet's core values are to foster Southern ownership, promote and strengthen a Southern voice and empower researchers from the Southern countries to access global knowledge and to engage in development policy debates.

GDNet currently demonstrates four areas of particular strength:

1. a set of internet-based services to improve access to knowledge in and from developing countries (online journals; online data sets; knowledge base of articles, researchers and organisation; funding sources information; GDN library);

2. an engaged community of researchers (more than 9,000 registered researchers) in developing and transition countries, who use and help grow the online knowledge base of research knowledge;

3. a pan-regional programme of capacity building on knowledge management. This has been evolving towards capacity in research communication; and

4. a strong regional dimension through its Regional Windows, most of which are managed by the Regional Network Partners (GDN local network partners) in eight regions.

GDN, and thus GDNet, firmly subscribe to the premise that good policy research can accelerate development and improve people's lives through informing better policy making. GDNet's outline theory of change is that supporting better research in developing and transition countries and communicating that research within the research community, and thence to policy makers, will lead to better policy making in

those countries. It acknowledges that this linear, binary model is highly simplistic and primarily a 'push' focused model. However, GDNet also plans to work on the demand-side with policy actors, trying to stimulate a 'research pull', initially as pilots in some regional partner networks.

A 2008 evaluation informed GDNet that to deliver its higher-level objective of policy relevance, it needs to become more than a researcher-facing, peer-to-peer service and move to becoming more of a knowledge translation platform. In its recent planning document, GDNet will shift from being an online base of development research articles to being an internationally recognised knowledge broker. In this way, it plans to address the lack of research-to-policy communications capacity in the research community and the shortage of opportunities to communicate research from and for the Global South. It also plans to further integrate Web 2.0 technology to enhance its ability to encourage knowledge sharing.

GDNet's outline theory of change
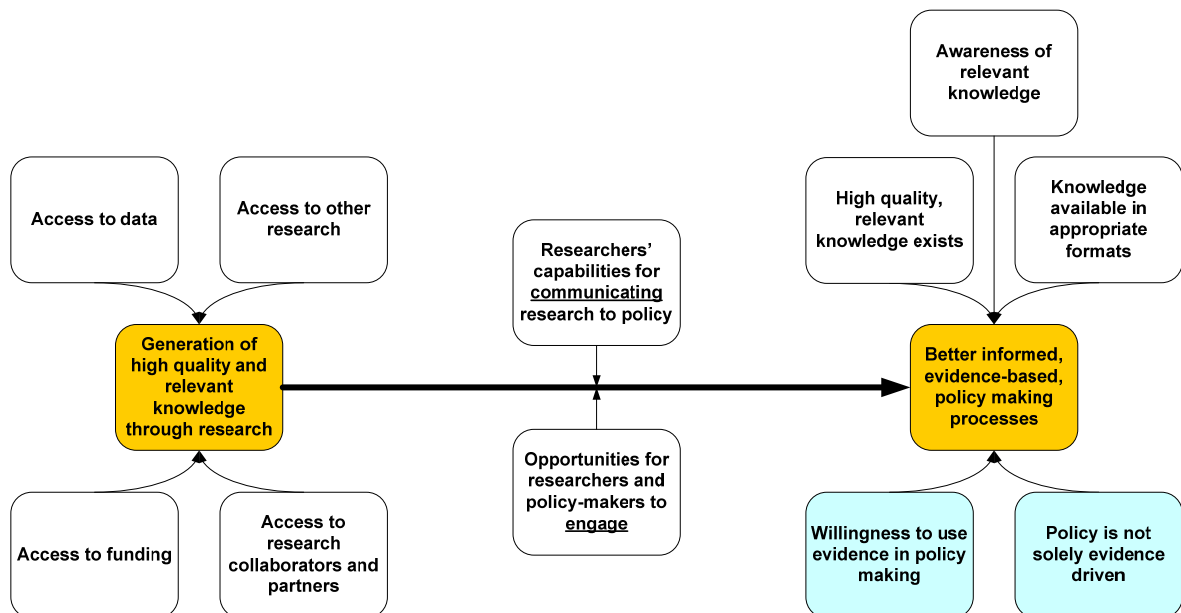
This diagram summarises GDNet's theory of change and the factors on which it needs to work to facilitate the communication of research to policy. It identifies three streams (which GDNet addresses in its new strategy).

1. High-quality research which is relevant to policy issues. For this, researchers need access to good data, access to the latest thinking on issues of concern through access to published journals, working papers and conferences and access to research funding. This is an area of current strength for GDNet;

2. Effective communication and outreach activities. Supporting researchers' capabilities to communicate their research to policy and more opportunities for researchers and policy actors to engage with each other on specific

policy issues. This is an area where GDNet needs to refine its approach in building capacities for research communication and creating opportunities for engagement between policy actors and researchers.

3. Use of research-based evidence in policy-making processes. GDNet can influence the accessibility of research-based knowledge which is communicated to policy actors, but not the awareness and application of that knowledge. However it can certainly ensure that research evidence is more accessible and provided in appropriate formats for the various policy audiences and uses, and that it is, for example, arranged thematically.

GDNet's goal of 'better policies informed by better research' can only be achieved through the collective outcomes of a number of initiatives. GDNet will therefore aim to identify and work closely with other initiatives that promote evidence-based policy making, such as the Evidence-Based Policy in Development Network (ebpdn) managed from ODI.

Further information

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www.gdnet.org/

Case study 5: IDRC, The ICT4D programme

Pan Asia and Acacia

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is a Canadian Crown corporation that works in close collaboration with researchers from the developing world in their search for the means to build healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies.

DFID has supported the work of two IDRC initiatives within its ICT4D programme area: ACACIA (with a focus in Africa) and Pan Asia. ICT4D is a term that has come to represent both the field of research that investigates the social, technical and economic effects of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in developing countries and the practical application of ICTs in directed efforts. The ICT4D programme supports research to better understand the various forces that influence who, why and how ICTs are embedded within different communities in Asia and Africa. The ultimate goal is to inform and influence innovations and policy development to ensure ICTs benefit societies in the South, which can contribute to the alleviation of poverty.

Pan Asia

Pan Asia has three strategic outcome areas for its current five-year programme:

- Evidence-based dialogue among regulators, policy makers, researchers, civil society and the private sector leads to well-informed decision making on policy issues relevant to ICT.

- Social and Technical Innovation: Innovative use of ICTs in mainstream development sectors being researched, adopted and scaled up.

- Enhanced Research Capacity and Networks in ICT for Development: Researchers, research institutions and research networks in Africa and Asia increase their capacity to generate new knowledge on ICT that has application for poverty reduction.

Although some Asian countries have substantial technological bases, strong and proven institutions, and well-developed human resources, others are at the early stages of adopting ICT and are eager to participate in the burgeoning knowledge society. Rural populations in the region comprise over 3 billion people who do not have access to any form of connectivity. Considerable improvements in connectivity, while creating new opportunities for economic growth and social development, are tempered by their limited penetration in rural areas. The majority of rural Asians today do not have access to basic telephony, let alone the internet. Moreover, South Asia, home to 50% of the world's poor, has more people who do not have access to the internet or telephony than the rest of the world combined.

Pan Asia supports research to understand better various forces that influence who, why and how ICTs are embedded within different communities in Asia. The ultimate goal is

to inform and influence innovations and policy development to ensure ICTs benefit societies in the South, which can contribute to the alleviation of poverty. Part of their work supports telecom policy research networks.

Networks have been able to generate research-based evidence, and use it to successfully influence policy makers and changes in regulations that relate to price regulation of mobile telephony. An example of one of these networks is LIRNEasia. LIRNEasia is a regional information and communication technology (ICT) policy and regulation think tank active across the Asia Pacific.

LIRNEasia researchers were able to successfully lobby the Sri Lankan government to reduce a proposed flat rate tax on SIM card purchases. Research from LIRNEasia was used to illustrate how the proposed plan to levy a flat monthly tax of LKR50 per SIM card, in addition to a 7.5% mobile levy, would affect the 'bottom of the pile' (BOP) mobile users more than others. This policy change has led to a tax structure that no longer targets BOP mobile users in a discriminatory way.

LIRNEasia researched the role of information in the agricultural cycle in Sri Lanka, including crop choice, growth, harvest and sale. The study uncovered startling evidence about the significant role played by information in reducing transaction costs – notably 15% of costs incurred by farmers in all stages of the agricultural cycle are information-related transaction costs. The study points to the indirect relationship between increased use of mobile phones and reduced transaction costs.

Acacia

Acacia is an integrated programme of research and demonstration projects that focuses on appropriate applications and technologies, infrastructure, policy and governance. It supports research on ICT that improves livelihood opportunities, enhances social service delivery, and empowers citizens while building the capacity of African researchers and research networks. Acacia's work in deploying resources to open up information access in rural communities includes:

- a study done within eight universities in seven southern African countries found: low levels of awareness with respect to African knowledge production; a lack of capacity to make research available online; and high levels of awareness and support of open access approaches (80% of researchers and 50% of deans); and

- the Wireless Distribution Network for Fantsuam Foundation project in Nigeria, which has contributed to the capacity of communities to design, implement and maintain ICT wireless networks and use them for development purposes, has been acknowledged by the Government of Nigeria (Telecommunication Regulator) as the first rural Wireless Internet Service Provider (ISP) in the country.

Further information

IDRC: http://www.idrc.ca/

ICT4D: http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-80704-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

IDRC Acacia: http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-5895-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

IDRC Digital Library: http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/ – Pan Asia communities

Pan Asia: http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-4509-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

LIRNE Asia: http://lirneasia.net/

CPR-South: http://www.cprsouth.org/

LIRNEAsia - Five Years in Review (2004-2009):

http://ipaper.ipapercms.dk/LIRNEasia/Fiveyearsinreview/

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Case Study 6: Mediae Company, Kenya

Makutano Junction television drama series

The Mediae Company focuses on reaching rural and peri-urban audiences in Africa to help communicate information, education and new ideas in entertaining ways.

Makutano Junction is one of its productions – a television drama series, based in Kenya, which aims to educate viewers on a range of issues, as well as to entertain them. Mediae Company has now produced ten series, comprising 13 half-hour episodes. The show attracts over 7.5 million viewers in Kenya, an estimated 3 million in Uganda and another 2 million in Tanzania. Programmes are locally produced in Kenya and written by a team of Kenyan/Ugandan writers.

Programmes have included research findings from various DFID-funded research consortia, as well as other information providers, scientists and researchers. The programme has been able to help audiences understand their rights and what services should be delivered to them by government/donors/civil society, as well as how to access these facilities and benefit from them.

Mediae bases its work on Makutano around three strategic principles:

1. know your audience (what it wants to hear/learn about, how it likes to hear about it, what its media consumption patterns are);

2. build local production capacity in local programming – this is what people want to watch, rather than imported programming; and

3. ground all programming in thorough audience research in order to monitor the impact of programmes on viewers' knowledge, attitude and practice.

Makutano Junction followed Mediae's earlier popular and effective radio soap opera, (Tembea na Majira). This ran for over 10 years and attracted around 5.5 million rural Kenyans at its peak. However, around 2004 the radio scene in Kenya fragmented. The airways were liberalised and a plethora of small, local vernacular FM stations sprang up. It was no longer possible to attract and retain large, KiSwahili speaking audiences. With this shift, there also came a considerable rise in TV ownership and access, particularly in rural areas of Kenya. In response, Mediae took its learning and developed a similar model for television.

Capacity building

Skills have been built in TV drama writing, direction, production, camera and sound work, editing and post production skills. Many of the crew and actors have moved on to develop their own productions for Kenyan TV, some so successfully that they pose healthy competition.

Makutano Junction paved the way for the production of quality local drama which has now been shown to be the most popular of all programming. The marketing

departments of the big commercial companies and ad agencies have long assumed that imported TV programming and News pull in the big audiences. This is no longer true. It's now the local dramas that win through easily.

Role as intermediary

Mediae has developed and fine-tuned a process for taking what is often quite complicated information and turning it into compelling storylines.

1. Development content is agreed and confirmed and background information produced for the writing team.

2. The content manager works with technical experts to develop briefing documents.

3. The writers and the script editor review the background information and develop storylines for the series.

4. Summaries of each proposed storyline are given to advisers for feedback.

5. For technical issues, the script editor may also consult the relevant adviser for a review during the story writing process.

6. Relevant scenes are extracted from an early draft of the script and sent to the appropriate adviser for feedback.

This process allows for both creativity and factual content to be fully respected and is a useful model for other organisations seeking to work productively with the media.

Working in partnership

Since 2006, the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) has collaborated with Mediae to communicate evidence-based sexual and reproductive health and rights messages through Makutano Junction. This has included messages about sexuality, intimate partner violence, obstetric fistula and contraceptives.

APHRC provides evidence from its own research and the wider literature, contributes to message development and comments on storylines, scripts and print resources for the show. Recent episodes communicated information on the risks of unsafe abortion, abortion's legal status and the availability of post-abortion care. More detailed information was made available in a comic, which viewers could request. 1,476 viewers sent in texts, including questions about various aspects of abortion and requests for the comic (which was eventually distributed to 1,093 viewers).

A survey carried out by Steadman Group found that Kenyan viewers of the show reported Makutano Junction to be an important source of information on abortion. 60% of viewers said that the show has helped them to advise others who have unwanted pregnancies.

APHRC felt this research communication partnership was successful for the following reasons:

- there was a focus on communicating issues where there were knowledge gaps among the public;

- the partnership dealt with controversial issues in a balanced and informative way, in a context where media coverage is often sensationalised or ill-informed; and

- it effectively combined research evidence, rights-based messages, and compelling drama.

Understanding users

A key feature which adds to Makutano's popularity is its SMS facility. At the end of each programme viewers are invited to SMS either with a comment about the show or with a request for a leaflet, which will give more detailed information on a specific issue which has been included in the programme. Mediae has received over 60,000 texts and about 45,000 requests for leaflets.

Lessons learned

This project has shown the massive appeal for this kind of programming: a locally written and produced drama with sound content research and good-quality production, and which is educative as well as entertaining, draws in the crowds.

It has not been easy to secure commercial sponsorship for the programme.

The project has also shown how different media can work together and support each other. The SMS facility has been well used, though the Makutano Junction website has been less well used (because fewer people have access to internet).

Sponsorship

Mediae hoped to cover production costs with funding from donor organisations and information providers who wish to reach large audiences, and to cover airtime costs with funding from the commercial sector. Initially, Mediae had some success when programmes were aired on KBC. However, since Mediae moved Makutano Junction over to Citizen, an up and coming radio and TV station, attracting major sponsorship has not been easy, possibly because viewers are largely rural or peri-urban and lack the disposable income that advertisers are looking for.

Further information

Programme clips on Youtube:
http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Makutano+junction&aq=f

Mediae Company: www.mediae.org

Makutano Junction website: www.makutanojunction.org.uk

Case Study 7: Institute of Development Studies

Mobilizing Knowledge for Development (Phase 2)

The Mobilizing Knowledge for Development (Phase 2) (MK4D2) is a 5-year DFID-funded programme of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). It aims to increase the contribution of research knowledge to poverty reduction by strengthening the emerging global network of information intermediaries in order to increase the sharing and effective use of research knowledge. It responds to three strategic problems:

1. **There is a lack of access to research knowledge** caused by weak infrastructure amongst users, high costs, social and institutional barriers, language, format and timeliness.

2. **The global knowledge base on poverty reduction is too narrow and fragmented**: powerful research producers crowd out those with less ability to communicate research or contextualize and adapt it to local needs and realities.

3. **The demand for research knowledge is not well articulated or understood:** the willingness, ability and skills to search for research – information capability – is weak among many potential users.

The MK4D2 programme thus has three strands:

1. **improving access to research locally and globally** by linking together intermediaries to strengthen the contextualization of research locally and the synthesis of research globally;

2. **enhancing knowledge-sharing capacity amongst intermediaries** by building effective interfaces to support collaboration; and

3. **strengthening the capacity of intermediaries to stimulate demand** for research by building information capability.

The power of in-between

As part of MK4D, a conference was held in Pretoria, South Africa in 2008, entitled 'Locating the Power of In-between; How research brokers and intermediaries support evidence-based pro-poor policy and practice'.

Many of the organisations and groups working as intermediaries do so in isolation from each other. This isolation and the lack of conceptual analysis around intermediaries and their work was the focus of this conference. The aim was to develop better conceptual and practical understanding of these information and knowledge intermediaries, alongside a greater understanding of their potential contribution to development processes.

The conference brought together 100 people: researchers, communicators, NGO workers, policy makers and intermediaries themselves, mainly from South Africa, East and Southern Africa and Europe.

Among the hypothesis formulated in the conference briefing paper were the following:

- Intermediaries' unique contribution lies in their commitment to highlighting multiple perspectives that draw on a broad range of evidence sources to create a rich information environment to support evidence-based policy making. Brokering research-based information from multiple sources may contribute to better social justice outcomes.

- Intermediaries' contribution is strengthened when they become aware of how their 'power of in-between' affects the flow of perspectives and sources of evidence into the research-policy environment.

Most intermediary work presented at the conference involved the use of web-based tools such as databases, often used in conjunction with communication tools such as email, print and face-to-face events.

"The conference has broadened my understanding of who intermediaries are – I'm so used to only thinking of librarians. I've been confronted with my (wrong) assumption."
Participant evaluation

Impact pathways

The *Impact Pathways* approach was developed partly in response to a frustration with the logframes previously used in evaluating IDS Knowledge Services. Their linear approach and four-level hierarchy made understanding the role of information either far too production focused or presented unrealistically high-level goals. For example, in less than four steps the logframe went from IDS producing websites to reducing poverty. Collection of qualitative evaluation data was left without an analytical framework and there were thus a myriad of stories, quotes and case studies but no way to bring them together to identify patterns and learn from them.

IDS also wanted to achieve a common framework around which its different knowledge services could plan and evaluate jointly, rather than use five service level logframes,, when so many of the expected outcomes were overlapping.

This methodology looks first at the IDS capacities and means of achieving outcomes, then at a sequence of desired outcomes and finally the IDS goals and vision:

- **Means of achieving outcomes** – Promotion of knowledge services and information literacy interventions; making information accessible; creating partnerships, networks and spaces for debate; research, evaluation and teaching.

  - **Immediate outcomes** - Access and debate.

  - **Intermediate outcomes** - Understanding and influence.

- **Higher level outcomes** - Information used to design, implement and change development interventions or set new agendas.

- **The goal**: Information contributes to more enabling development processes and interventions which are pro-poor, inclusive and equitable.

- **The vision**: A world in which poverty does not exist, social justice prevails and the voices of all people are heard in national and international institutions.

This evaluation approach is now of relevance to all IDS knowledge services. The more specifically the outcomes and target groups involved are defined, the more effective services are likely to be in achieving the desired changes. It now allows for a more meaningful evaluation.

An information literacy intervention

Mature learners from nine different countries, studying a Masters in Participation, Power and Social Change at IDS, benefited from a new training initiative designed to increase their awareness of information literacy. All worked either as consultants, for NGOs, government departments or international organisations.

The intervention aimed to help learners systematically understand and define the nature of a problem, become familiar with the 'information landscape', including electronic search tools, to manage the information gathered and critically reflect on the learning process.

Responses

To enable evaluation of the intervention, a self-assessment diagnostic test was conducted. It included questions about:

- tools used in searching for information (for example statistical sources, information from colleagues, reference works and online sources);

- the learner's approach to information searching exercises (for example confidence in being able to identify relevant sources of data, information and knowledge, criteria used to judge the quality and credibility of information extracted); and

- problems experienced in searches (for example too much information, too little time and inaccessibility of information retrieval systems or services).

All candidates indicated an increase in their information literacy and overall the outcome was positive.

Positive qualitative responses included: 'a more systematic approach to find information', 'very helpful in understanding information as a reflective and conscious process', 'mapping research domain and focus', and 'process of using information to write analytical paper'.

Critical comments included: 'more time to do some of the exercises', 'more time to discuss collectively' and 'could have used more of participants experience'.

More far reaching benefits included recognition of the importance as well as the ability to do preparatory work before searching for information. This included the importance of identifying key words and identifying appropriate sources of information.

The majority felt that their initial assessment of their ability should have been lower i.e. they were not as competent as they thought at finding and using information sources.

Further information

An analysis of the Locating the Power of In-between Conference 1-2 July 2008, Pretoria, South Africa: http://www.hsrc.ac.za/Research_Publication-21525.phtml

Locating the power of in-between: how research brokers and intermediaries support evidence-based pro-poor policy and practice: http://www.ids.ac.uk/index.cfm?objectid=A5F96CF6-B45F-9E73-CC38C62EE60F23E5

Intermediary Impact: Case Studies of intermediary influence: http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/strategic-learning-initiative/i-k-mediary-group/publications

Impact pathways: http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/about-us/evaluation

Diagnostic tests for evaluation: http://www.ifla.org/files/hq/papers/ifla75/94-hepworth-en.pdf

The bridge portal providing information on gender issues: www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/

Case Study 8: INASP

Making a difference through training and resource exploitation

International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) work focuses on global communication, knowledge and networks. Its programmes currently focus on strengthening the research communication system, with particular emphasis on the needs of developing and emerging countries. The organisation's work takes an holistic approach, engaging with the capacities of the range of stakeholders who own and drive the system, and the networks, best practice and policy environments that support and enable them.

INASP's work is approached through core principles of equity, stakeholder participation, strategic partnerships, social responsibility and, most centrally, sustainability so that the activities become country-owned, driven, managed, funded and implemented. Two examples illustrate this approach: exploiting under-used existing resources and local embedding of new resources.

Daystar University Library

Daystar University Library, Kenya, has an excellent resource collection of books, magazines and journals (national and international), plus CD databases, videos, DVDs and a host of electronic resources and online databases subscribed to through INASP's Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERii). Monitoring the use of these resources showed that Daystar had a surprisingly low usage rate. Beyond reasons such as slow connectivity, it became clear that awareness, or lack of it, was a contributing factor. Training to raise awareness appeared an obvious route to make a significant impact on usage.

Participants applying search techniques at an electronic resource training workshop

A workshop for library and teaching staff, as well as research students, was held and focused on introducing and accessing the electronic resources available to them. Questionnaires at the end of the workshop showed positive feedback. However, the

impact review six months later showed long-term benefits, particularly the application and expansion of the workshop activities. Reaching out to a diverse group and ensuring they were confident in both using and teaching these skills to colleagues, has made a notable impact on use of the university's information resources.

Journals Online project

Development researchers are expected to submit their research as academic papers to peer-reviewed journals. Both the researchers and their institutions gain recognition through the publishing of their work. However, most research journals charge their readers, which makes it difficult for researchers and policy makers from the South to gain access to research papers. DFID has funded INASP's work in seeking to encourage open access to journals. The Journals Online projects (JOLs) are a part of the second phase of PERii.

The JOLs work began with the initial African Journals Online project (AJOL). INASP developed software providing a sophisticated but low-cost and low-bandwidth website. In line with INASP's mandate to develop sustainability and local capacity, AJOL was moved to Africa in 2005, and it is now managed by a not-for-profit trust in South Africa. It has gone from strength to strength, with more than 370 journals from 27 countries on the site in November 2009.

Two evaluations of AJOL were used in planning the development of an Asian JOL. Instead of having one large site incorporating journals from many countries, individual country sites were developed and then combined into a search portal called AsiaJOL. The visibility of the research on the JOLs was further enhanced when INASP entered into an agreement with CrossRef to allow all articles published on the JOLs to have digital object identifiers (DOIs) assigned to them.

The following Asian JOLs have been set up: Vietnam (VJOL) and Nepal (NepJOL) 2006, Bangladesh (BanglaJOL) 2007, Philippines (PhilJOL) and Sri Lanka (SLJOL) 2008.

 "I must thank you for your support of our journal through PhilJOL. As soon as we got into PhilJOL, the number of submissions has increased significantly. The increase is so significant, that I am considering suggesting to our publisher that we increase the number of issues per year from 2 to 3. The quality of the submissions has also improved! I know that this improvement is partly due to our visibility in PhilJOL."
PhilJOL Journal

In order to assist editors to improve the quality of their journals and train them in the use of the online peer-review system, a series of in-country workshops was developed and has become an important part of the JOL concept. The first workshop usually discusses the issues of online publishing and then editors are encouraged to create their own online strategies and promotion plans. The second workshop is usually held after a country JOL has been established and it addresses some of the production quality issues, but mainly focuses on training the editors to load their own content onto the website. The third workshop brings together the same editors to discuss the

functions of an editorial office and goes through the full online peer-review process using the JOL website.

"It has been an excellent year for us. Till today we have received 47 manuscripts from authors around the world - highest ever in our 15 years of publishing!" BanglaJOL Journal

In November 2009 the Asian JOLs included 160 journals with 8,328 articles, of which 77% are available as open access full text. The Asian JOLs have been successful in that they have allowed the journals to obtain a web presence quickly, easily and at little cost without the need for technical expertise or their own server. Intentionally the JOL websites have been kept very simple so that they are more easily downloaded in bandwidth-poor countries.

"I am very pleased with PhilJOL; our journal and the health information contained therein are suddenly much more visible online than ever before. This availability would not have been possible or easily achievable by a developing country publication such as ours were it not for the generous support of INASP. You are levelling the playing field. Many thanks." PhilJOL Journal
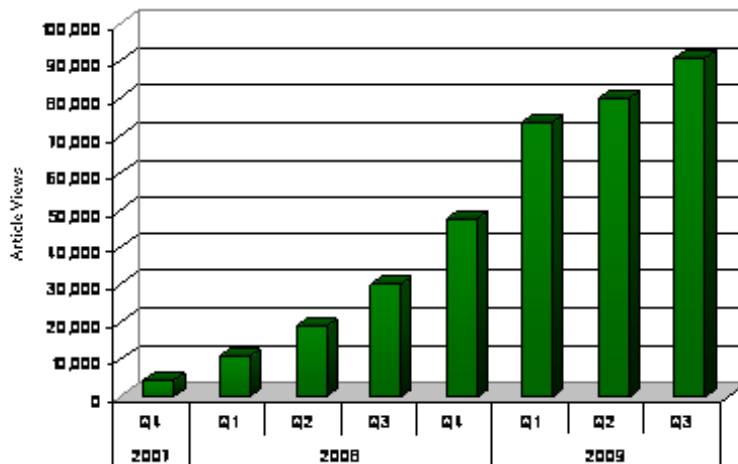
Article views for BanglaJOL

Sustainability of the JOLs is important and, if possible, each of the JOLs will be handed over to local management within four years of inception. This depends on the identification of a suitable local host organization and may involve transfer of the physical hosting of the website depending on the power and bandwidth conditions within the country. Vietnam JOL, for example, was transferred to local hosting at the National Centre for Scientific & Technological Information in March 2009.

Further information

www.inasp.info/perii

If you know where to look: Improving usage of resources at Daystar University:
http://www.inasp.info/media/www/documents/2009-KE-Gitachu-If-you-know-where-to-look-w.pdf

Uncovering hidden gems: The Journals Online Project at INASP:
www.inasp.info/uncovering-hidden-gems

BanglaJOL and the JSR: Experiences with the online journal system:
www.inasp.info/banglajol-and-the-jsr

Case Study 9: Panos London

Relay – Communicating research through the Media programme

Relay's goal is to encourage and support the creation of debate around key development issues through the communication of development-related research through the media. Relay seeks to expand awareness and understanding of development issues and encourage greater demand for change and reform from people themselves, including demand for greater accountability from their governments. In conjunction with other actors (such as CSOs) involved in campaigning and advocacy work, and based on our theory of change, they aim to be a key player in facilitating dialogue that can influence policy and decision-making.

Relay has a number of different activities and programmes, mostly working in Africa and India, with some activities beginning in Jamaica. Their main focus to date has been:

- to develop journalist skills to report on research through workshops, trainings and fellowships;
- to develop researchers skills to communicate key messages and findings from their research, particularly to the media, through training workshops and media guides;
- to broker trust and working relationships between research organisations and journalists/media houses, through the creation of working partnerships and coalitions;
- to support the creation of (research-informed) media coverage of development and policy issues;
- to encourage wider coverage on these issues, where possible, such as through serialisation agreements with media houses;
- to produce media briefs to support journalists to work on specific themes and use research as a source; and
- to produce evidence based learning about our activities and how research uptake can influence policy outcomes.

Relay bases its work around two strategic principles:

- First, that media coverage and sustained debate of policy-related research findings increases the likelihood that research findings will be taken up and influence policy outcomes and decision-making.
- Second, that the main reasons for limited uptake of research and reporting through the media in the countries where Relay works are due to limited skills and knowledge on how to communicate research and policy findings clearly to different audiences, and secondly a lack of trust between researchers and their organisations and journalists which would enable them to collaborate more effectively.

Key findings

The political and institutional context, including the degree of representativeness of government and the vibrancy of civil society, are important to understanding the capacity of the media to take up research and generate public debate around research and evidence to influence policy outcomes. The following factors strengthen its capacity of the media to do so:

- the capacity of **journalists** to use research to create stories that capture the public mood and that are related to existing and emerging policy-making agendas;

- the capacity of **researchers** to produce policy relevant research and to work with intermediaries to present it in a way that the media can use;

- the capacity of **civil society activists** to pick up policy-related research and drive public debate around it; and

- the **strength of the relationships among these actors** – journalists, civil society activists and researchers – and their associated organisations, and the degree of openness and trust among them.

A case study from Kenya of a training workshop held in Naivasha, Kenya, in 2009[70] on the subject of generating media debate on tax, governance and accountability, provides useful examples of how Relay works to build the capacity of, and relationships between, journalists, researchers and civil society activists.

There are a number of obstacles to generating evidence informed and inclusive debate in many developing countries. Among the key bottlenecks that Relay has identified are the lack of skills, capacities and knowledge:

- Journalists lack skills and training to report on complex development issues, and do not know how to engage with research.

- Researchers do not know how to get their research into the public domain and to work with the media to do this.

However, more fundamental than any of this is the lack of understanding between the two professional groups, which inhibits the kind of collaboration needed to generate debate. Relay has developed a series of methodologies to address these underlying obstacles used in this workshop:

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[70] Draft case study: Ingrid Yngstrom (2010).The role of the media in good governance: A case study from Kenya on generating media debate on tax, governance and accountability. Relay, Panos London

Breaking the ice

Ice-breaker workshops are a core part of the Relay approach. They allow researchers and journalists to really break down erroneous ideas and beliefs about each other and provide a platform for moving forward as collaborators on new ground. They open up the possibility of seeing another's perspective and experience. This has the power to begin to breakdown much of the mistrust that exists between them.

When journalists were asked what annoys them the most about researchers, they came up with the following:

> *"It is difficult to validate the authenticity and credibility of research."*

> *"Researchers don't understand the journalistic process."*

The researchers were then able to respond to these issues.

When researchers were asked what annoys them most about journalists, they came up with the following:

> *"Journalists don't report the things the researcher thinks are significant."*

> *"Journalists lack knowledge about key research issues."*

The journalists then had the opportunity to explain their point of view.

Research cafes

Researchers often do not know how to clearly communicate their findings to journalists. Researchers at the workshop were given direct mentoring and support from a communications specialist on how to identify, package and get across clearly their key messages – and keep to time! – in a single ten-minute slot.

The research cafe involves four stations, with researchers at each station presenting for ten minutes on a particular theme, and groups of journalists rotating to each of the sessions with an opportunity to ask questions.

Following the research cafes, journalists were asked to come back with story ideas and share these with the group. Researchers were asked whether they thought that the journalists had grasped the key issues. Overall, only about half the research messages were understood by journalists.

The exercise demonstrated that researchers need to be sharper when communicating their key messages, and journalists need to work hard to engage with complex and new issues, taking care to crystallise these into good story ideas and identify sources they can follow up with for further information and clarification.

Practice interviews

Pairs of journalists and researchers had time to prepare their questions and answers on a selected topic. Each interview was then videotaped, with both parties expected to give their best performance.

Having the hands on experience – for journalists, of interviewing a researcher, and for researchers, giving an interview – is critical so that both can overcome their fears in a safe environment and know that they are equipped to replicate this experience once the workshop is over.

Once each pair had been filmed, the group came back together to watch the interviews and offer comments.

During the session, journalists and researchers had both faced their fears and had a chance to practice their new skills and get professional and peer feedback in a constructive environment. By going through the exercise of doing an on-camera interview, journalists and researchers can go home confident that they have done it, with practical tips and ideas for improvement from colleagues about how to improve further next time.

As a result of the workshop, a number of issues were opened up and discussed. Many potentially contentious issues were raised and discussed resulting in more understanding and trust between researchers and journalists about how to work together more effectively. Several media stories and reports resulted directly from the workshop. A coalition of journalists, civil society representatives and researchers was formed meeting as a group three times a year, providing a space for further discussion and debate, facilitating and sharing contacts and links.

The Relay experience show that trust, skills and knowledge of key issues are all essential components of creating the ground for better media coverage and creating opportunities for debate and for partners to work more closely together. Without this groundwork, there is little chance of the media being able to have a long-term impact on policy.

Further information

Relay website: http://www.Panos.org.uk/relay

Carpenter, J and Yngstrom I. March 2010. Research makes the news; Strengthening media engagement with research to influence policy. Panos London:

Working with the media: http://www.Panos.org.uk/?lid=20951

Getting into the kitchen: media strategies for research: http://www.Panos.org.uk/?lid=20949

Case Study 10: SciDev. Net

SciDev.Net: A website devoted to the role of science and technology in promoting sustainable development

SciDev.Net's main goal is to help individuals and organisations in the developing world make better-informed decisions on science and technology-related issues that have an impact on sustainable development.

It achieves this by providing reliable and authoritative information and analysis of such issues through its free-access website that contains news, articles, views and analysis about science and technology in the developing world. The website has a bi-weekly editorial, comment and feedback from users, notices (including lists of meetings, grants and jobs) and electronic links.

The majority of its articles (more than 90% in the case of news items) are commissioned exclusively for SciDev.Net, primarily by journalists and researchers across the developing world, although they also provide summaries and links to relevant articles appearing on other freely-available websites.

All articles are grouped into six 'regional gateways', relevant to specific geographical regions and, in addition, articles are also divided into six subject-based topic areas, each of which is further divided into a number of subtopics, of which there are currently more than eighty on the website.

The six topic areas are:

- agriculture and environment;
- climate change and energy;
- health;
- new technologies;
- science and innovation policy; and
- science communication.

A series of 'spotlights' is published regularly throughout the year providing detailed coverage of particular aspects of one of these topics.

In 2009, 4,852 separate items were posted on the website, bringing the total number of articles posted since the website was launched in 2001 to 19,676.

Target user groups

SciDev.Net's target audience is all those with an active interest in the interaction between science, innovation and sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on the range of stakeholders that have either a role or a close interest in policy making concerning such issues.

Such stakeholders include government officials, NGO officials, policy researchers, consultants, research administrators, journalists and other science communicators, librarians and information managers, aid agency officials, scientific researchers, lecturers/teachers and students.

Analysis of registered users, which currently number almost 50,000, show that in total, 72.3% of the list consists of people from our target regions in the developing world, with the biggest groups of users coming from Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and South Asia.

During 2009, the website received an average of 130,000 visits and 260,000 page views, every month. The countries from which the most visits were received, in declining order, were as follows: India (174,774), China (66,747), Mexico (49,340), South Africa (41,879), Philippines (34,859), Peru (33,172), Colombia (30,786), Argentina (25,665), Venezuela (21,573) and Kenya (21,188).

Use of website

A user survey in 2009 revealed that 95% of the respondents rated the SciDev.Net website as 'excellent' or 'good', and 84% said that they would recommend the site to others. In particular:

- 88% of respondents agreed with the statement that "it brings my attention to important issues" whilst 87% agreed that "There is always something interesting to read" and that "It has a strong emphasis on issues affecting many developing countries."

- 84% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the topic-specific 'Spotlights' provided an excellent overview of the topic being covered, 83% felt that the topics covered were timely, 82% agreed that the topics covered were relevant to their interests and 72% of respondents found the additional resources, such as links and definitions, very useful.

Anecdotal evidence of role in research uptake

SciDevNet's website has the benefit of constant monitoring of usage and, to a degree, impact, complemented by occasional polls of the user base. However, it is difficult to provide examples on which information and analysis provided by SciDev.Net has been directly responsible for the outcome of specific decisions, since these tend in principle to be the result of inputs of information for numerous sources (as well as being heavily influenced by social, economic and political factors).

Nevertheless, it is possible to demonstrate through anecdotal examples the way material from the website is used in practical circumstances. For example, a 'Tell us your story' campaign was launched in February 2010. It asked users to describe their experiences and to indicate whether any SciDev.Net material had helped them to achieve a significant development-related task. In response, over 120 stories were received from users all over the world.

Anecdotal but indicative feedback on impact revealed that SciDev.Net users have been able to help their local government by making communities participate fully in solving minor problems such as waste, controlling insect-borne diseases such as malaria and bacterial disease (typhoid) and how to treat water.

"I think this site has made tremendous efforts in promoting science in Africa". A college dean in Ethiopia

"The information gathered from SciDev.Net has equipped me and my fellows with new tools in implementing climate mitigation activities" A solar energy engineer in Tanzania engaged in the Planning and development of renewable energy projects

The role of intermediaries in research uptake

The enthusiasm and positive responses that have greeted the development of the website provide evidence of a growing awareness within developing countries of the need for better information about the potential contribution of science and technology towards meeting their needs.

An Overseas Development Institute working paper produced as part of a SciDev.Net project, noted that poorly institutionalised evidence-based policy-making in developing countries is in general compounded by lower levels of scientific capacity and of public education in science. There is therefore a strong need for capacity-building, institutional reform and public education. System-wide capacity-building around the science–policy interface is necessary, targeted to the needs of diverse actors. At the same time, policy makers expressed strong interest in greater access to advice from scientific experts regarding the policy relevance of their findings.

Feedback on impact and challenges includes:

- a strong demand for information that is not being adequately met by domestic media, for which science reporting tends to be a relatively low priority;

- effective science communication within developing countries depends on the creation of skilled professional communicators, including science journalists, but also information officers and consultants able to translate scientific ideas into non-technical language accessible to all stakeholders in the decision-making process; and

- developing effective skills in science communication is a long-term process, particularly in countries where modern science is not an embedded component of national culture and, if successful, would be guaranteed the same level of media coverage as, say, sport or politics.

Organisations such as SciDev.Net have an important role to play in disseminating scientific information that is simultaneously accurate, timely and accessible.

They have an equally important function in terms of helping development countries build the capacity to develop such communication skills within their own professional

communities, for example, by ensuring that as much content as possible is written by journalists and researchers within the developing countries.

Further information

SciDev.Net: http://www.scidev.net/en/content/overview/

Political Science? Strengthening science-policy dialogue in developing countries: http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/338.pdf

Case study 11: World Federation of Science Journalists

The Science Journalism Cooperation approach — benefits of *in situ* training

Science journalism Cooperation(SjCOOP) is a three-year project in peer-to-peer mentoring in science journalism initiated by the World Federation of Science Journalists (WFSJ) based in Quebec, Canada from 2006 to 2009, jointly funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), DFID and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Its aim was to train science journalists at a distance throughout Africa and the Arab World.

The Problem

There are dozens of training opportunities offered to African journalists every year. Despite all this ongoing training, many Southern media outlets lack specialist journalists. The expected low quality of the reporting of scientific and technological issues creates a situation where 'bad' science often has the upper hand. NGOs and scientists with important information for the public thus shy away from the media, with the inevitable result that the public is generally badly prepared to welcome evidence-based policy making.

SjCOOP wanted to find a different approach to improve the quality of science-related reporting.

The SjCOOP approach

SjCOOP offered *in situ* distance training in science reporting to 60 mentees – aspiring science journalists from 30 countries in Africa and the Middle East. The journalists received training in the basic skills of science reporting but – because the training was offered by peers – they also received 'real-time' advice on how to develop their careers as science journalists.

There were 15 mentors – experienced science journalists from Africa, America, Europe and the Middle East. Mentoring was done at a distance, mainly via a dedicated WFSJ website, emails, as well as Skype calls and telephone. Mentors assisted with all aspects of the work of a science journalist: identifying good stories and sources, commenting on writing and editing, finding outlets for freelancing, as well as advising on career moves and on how to manage editors. Numerous activities and strategies were implemented to support the distance mentoring.

There were three groups: English-speaking Africa, the Middle East, and French-speaking Africa. The work of mentors was coordinated by three regional coordinators, respectively based in Abuja (Nigeria), Yaoundé (Cameroon) and in Cairo (Egypt), supported by a project management team based at the WFSJ Secretariat in Canada.

SjCOOP began with a one-week training workshop for mentors in Munich, Germany, in July 2006. The individual mentoring started in September 2006 and ended in September 2008. The whole project ended in March 2009.

Mentees followed an eight-lesson online course in science journalism. During the two years of the mentoring, participants met face-to-face in Nairobi (November 2006) and Doha (February 2008).

Mentoring associations

SjCOOP also supported the establishment of associations of science journalists in Africa and in the Middle East, involving both mentees and mentors. The young associations were then twinned with well-established ones.

Mentoring of associations was mainly done through meetings, sharing of experience and twinning. During its last year, SjCOOP provided grants to support the activities of five African and Arab associations, who organised their own conferences and training workshops.

The impact of peer-to-peer mentoring

By 2009, when the SjCOOP training ended, networks of science journalists were in place in Africa and in the Arab World. Each network has one regional association complemented by national associations. The African network includes 9 national associations (6 created by SjCOOP) with a total membership of 408 journalists. The Arab network has two national associations (created through SjCOOP) representing some 215 journalists.

The trainee journalists and their mentors now represent the hardcore of these two networks of professional science. They now use internet technologies like Skypechats and Skypecasts to keep in touch with scientists and colleagues. While supported by SjCOOP, these journalists have created the first pan-African science magazine, 5 new science TV programmes, 6 new science radio programs and 7 new science beats in newspapers, magazines and news agencies; 15 have been promoted because of their new skills and 17 now freelance internationally. Their professionalism has been recognized by 44 prizes, awards, scholarships and internships awarded to 22 of them.

Two SjCOOP journalists have become professors of science journalism in universities in Egypt and Madagascar. Five of the associations have organized their own conferences, workshops and training activities with SjCOOP support.

The results

The project has demonstrated that, within two years, it is possible to train, at a distance, developing country general reporters in the skills of science reporting using a mentoring approach through the use of internet tools.

Outcome mapping methodology, developed by the Evaluation Unit IDRC, Canada, was used to assess the programme's impact. This focuses on assessing changes in behaviours of the people and organisations within a development programme. Progress markers were agreed such as 'Mentees making a career' and 'Mentees becoming mentors'. Participants were asked to keep 'strategy journals' to note how the activities

were unfolding and the markers progressing. However, participants found it very challenging to keep journals regularly.

A lasting result of the project is the creation of an eight-lesson online course in science journalism, which is now freely accessible. The online course was so well received that other organisations funded new versions in Chinese, Portuguese and Spanish, the most recent being a version in Turkish.

Many results were totally unexpected:

- The president of the World Federation of Science Journalists (Ms Nadia El-Awady, from Egypt) is, for the first time, a journalist from the developing world. She is becoming a role model for Arab women, as a woman, as a mother of 4 children, and as a science journalist.

- The seventh World Conference of Science Journalists will be held for the first time on the African continent, in June 2011, in Cairo (Egypt).

- Journalists started organising news conferences with scientists through Skype.

- Although it was not an objective of the SjCOOP project, there is some evidence that at least ten of the SjCOOP mentees' reporting has influenced policy and/or decision making at the national level.

A key success of SjCOOP has been making science reporting a pan-Arab and a pan-African reality. This new global network in science journalism creates an incentive for better reporting and increased recognition of science journalists in the developing world.

Further information

A Guide to Peer to Peer Mentorship in Science Journalism: Lessons from the SjCOOP, by Prof Kathryn O'Hara, Carleton University, Ottawa, 2009, WFSJ:

http://www.wfsj.org/files/file/resources/documents/MentoringGuideSciJou.pdf

Final Report of the Peer–to-peer Development and Support of Science Journalism in the Developing World: the SjCOOP Project May 2009, WFSJ:

http://www.wfsj.org/files/file/projects/SjCOOP_Technical_Report.pdf

Online Course in Science Journalism, WFSJ. The 8 lessons are accessible free in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish:

http://www.wfsj.org/course/

Case study 12: WRENmedia

Communicating agricultural developments for change

WRENmedia is a multi-media production company reporting on people and places around the world. Through capacity building of journalists and in bringing the media together with researchers, WRENmedia endeavours to stimulate improved reporting of research and development, and to encourage researchers to use the media as an effective communication channel. Their communication initiatives are the New Agriculturist online and AGFAX radio interviews (monthly broadcast kits on key issues and developments used by over 250 radio producers).

Key strategic or theoretical principles

1. Production of demand-led communication initiatives.

2. Improved access to information on agriculture and rural development issues among southern researchers, practitioners and the media through attractive and useable multi-media products.

3. Improved capacity of development stakeholders (researchers, policy makers) and journalists to better communicate research and development issues.

Agriculture on-air – AGFAX

Every month, an audio CD of interviews and a booklet of accompanying transcripts are posted to broadcasters at 80 radio stations in 16 African countries. Recorded by Africans for Africans, AGFAX's monthly radio service, now in its 15th year, provides the latest information on agricultural and rural development to agricultural broadcasters and, through them, to millions of listeners across Africa. The AGFAX service is used by national, local, FM and community radio stations. The interviews and transcripts are provided in English, together with suggested studio introductions and contact details for additional information. Some regularly translate AGFAX material in local languages, or edit it to suit their needs, for example extracting short sound bites for use in news bulletins.

 "We have had many occasions of getting information from AGFAX that is not found anywhere. Advice on the dangers of using chemicals, especially wrong usage, poor skin protection, effects of chemical poisoning etc. We cannot forget recent interviews about jatropha, mushrooms and medicinal gardens." Gilbert Njodzeka, Green Care, Cameroon.

A valued resource

AGFAX material is commissioned from an expanding network of African journalists. All are mentored in how to approach interview topics and produce reports in different styles, building their skills and confidence in agricultural science reporting.

"I believe in the power of radio if you want to get your voice heard. I regularly hear AGFAX interviews on SABC in South Africa. They are always very good, very interesting and I am sure people take notice of what is said." Boitshepo Bibi Giyose, food and nutrition security advisor, NEPAD

All AGFAX material, including broadcast-quality audio, is available for free download by anyone from the AGFAX website (www.AGFAX.net).

The New Agriculturist – recent impact

The New Agriculturist is an online agricultural publication with six issues produced over the past eleven years. There is considerable interest in New Agriculturist in cross-regional application of lessons/technology/policies (for example Africa to Asia and vice versa). It contains a wide range of detailed, science based articles with regular foci on different countries and issues.

Since the end of 2007, the number of hits accessing New Agriculturist has increased by 11% with a total of just under 200,000 hits recorded for 2008, demonstrating use and demand for accessing online agricultural information. Regular versions of the New Agriculturist on CD are released. This valuable resource, available free-of-charge, has proved popular, particularly in countries where internet access is difficult, and also among readers wishing to share articles with colleagues or fellow students. 1,000 copies were distributed in 2009. Feedback indicates copies are often shared and circulated with colleagues, used in further education courses and in training programmes with farmers.

Training for journalists programme

Many contributors to AGFAX have attended DFID-funded capacity building regional training workshops during 2008/09 on better science reporting, helping them to build partnerships with African researchers and improve their reporting skills in different settings, from conference halls to farmers' fields. As a result of these workshops, AGFAX is now a service predominantly recorded by Africans for Africans.

A visit to the South Rift valley has enabled African journalists to get first-hand experience of the recent drought in Kenya and its impacts on pastoralists and their livestock. Eight radio and print journalists from East, West and Southern Africa took part.

Over 30 journalists from 12 African countries have now attended training workshops in the last 2 years alongside international conferences. A pre-workshop questionnaire is used to ensure training is tailored accordingly. Feedback on the quality of training is always requested. An Impact survey is sent out 6 months after training to assess impact on reporting skills and agricultural science coverage in the longer term. Several trainees have gained recognition and awards for their improved reporting.

An evening media event was held for interested researchers to learn more about interacting with the press. Feedback demonstrated that this was a valued and helpful session.

Programme monitoring and evaluation plan

Monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of the communication programme, assessing whether the desired outcomes are being met. Their monitoring and evaluation uses a range of assessment instruments:

For New Agriculturist:

- online survey to improve understanding of the readers;
- telephone survey for more qualitative answers on how people use the information from New Agriculturist;
- weekly web statistics;
- editorial log to show geographical balance and breadth of articles/issues covered;
- tracking system to determine number of readers using RSS feed, New Agriculturist emails and AGFAX website and the articles they read; and
- database for CD resource, monitoring requests.

For the AGFAX radio service:

- new feedback form with prizes awarded for first responses received;
- online feedback form for email response;
- develop RSS feed; and
- editorial log.

Key developments and findings

- More interviews for AGFAX are being submitted by African correspondents, usually between two and four each month.

- Surveys conducted after workshops for researchers in Arusha, Mombasa and Ibadan revealed that 90% of respondents were more inclined to interact with the media as a result of the session, with 34% respondents having had some actual interaction with the media since the workshops.

- Radio discussion groups in three countries (Ghana, Uganda and Zambia) have been set up to improve understanding of how the AGFAX service is perceived and how it might be improved.

- Greater use of Web 2.0 tools, including Twitter and Facebook, will continue to be considered as a means of raising the profile of New Agriculturist.

- In response to the unmet demand for better agricultural science reporting in Africa, the training workshops will continue in the next two years.

Further information

AGFAX radio: www.AGFAX.net

New Agriculturist: www.new-ag.info

Communicating research: contributing to sustainable development (Project Reference: R8351) available from: www.wrenmedia.co.uk.

Implementation of monitoring and evaluation activities *WRENmedia Annual Report 2008/9 to DFID* available from WRENmedia: www.wrenmedia.co.uk.

R4D articles:
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/SearchResearchDatabase.asp?ProjectID=60517

http://www.dfid.gov.uk/R4D/caseStudies.asp?ArticleID=50428