

Mobilising Knowledge for Development (MK4D): Sharing What We've Learned

Report from the Lesson Sharing workshop on Phase One
of the Mobilising Knowledge for Development (MK4D)
programme, IDS, Brighton, UK, 30 October 2009

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About IDS Knowledge Services and the Strategic Learning Initiative (SLI)

IDS Knowledge Services facilitate the exchange of development knowledge between continents, sectors and disciplines through a wide range of media, co-creating online information services and print publications with Southern partners.

The Strategic Learning Initiative (SLI) was a time-bound initiative within Phase One of the Mobilising Knowledge for Development programme (MK4D). It ran from 2005-09, with a remit to promote evidence-based learning about knowledge, information and communication in international development.

SLI was guided by the belief that development and social change are greatly enhanced by the availability, accessibility and use of research and information. The initiative stimulated learning and developed capacity among information and knowledge intermediaries who share this belief. It facilitated learning and innovation by sharing critical thinking and examples of best practice. It drew on four areas of expertise: Capacity Development, Research, Marketing and Monitoring and Evaluation.

SLI's values and work are embedded in Phase Two of MK4D by a new team, the **Impact and Learning Team**, based in the Communications Department at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Sussex.

About this publication

This is a report of the Lesson Sharing Workshop held on October 30th, 2009, during which staff from the Mobilising Knowledge for Development (MK4D) programme shared and discussed learning from Phase One of the programme with interested stakeholders (donors, other information and knowledge intermediaries, and research communicators).

This publication can be downloaded from

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

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“The intermediary sector should look to be what the user needs”

1. Executive Summary

Introduction

Research knowledge often falls short of its potential to strengthen international development efforts and improve the lives of people living in poverty. Despite many initiatives, barriers constrain the use of research and evidence in development policy and practice, both locally and internationally. These include lack of access, ineffective contextualising for target user groups and weak demand for research.

How research is communicated, as well as by whom, is central to its use by development actors. In recent years, rapidly evolving communications technologies have transformed the way in which research is generated and shared. Traditional communications approaches and actors have been supplemented by individuals, organisations and networks harnessing these new tools for research communication: initially email and websites, more recently mobile telephony, wikis and blogs. Within this field, a new generation of knowledge and information brokers - sometimes referred to as intermediaries or info-mediaries - has emerged, focusing their work on promoting the use of evidence and research knowledge in development policy and practice.

Intermediaries play a key strategic role by stimulating demand for, enhancing access to and enabling use of research. They create spaces for debate, structures for accessing and archiving, processes for synthesis and profile-raising and platforms for exchange. Examples include resource centres, online portals and gateways, policy briefings and handbooks. These initiatives have been driven by a range of donor agency agendas, ranging from good governance, access to information, interests in knowledge sharing, knowledge management or ICT, as well as initiatives to bring together a knowledge base in a particular sector or topic such as HIV. The common thread is that intermediaries proactively seek to connect potential development actors in policy and practice with the research knowledge that can strengthen their work – intermediaries actively mobilise knowledge for development.

Mobilising Knowledge for Development

The Institute of Development Studies, UK (IDS) is a long-standing producer of intermediary services. The British Library for Development Studies (BLDS) was founded in 1960, followed by the gender briefing service BRIDGE and online portals Eldis and id21 in the mid-1990s, and a range of issue-based services developed in the early 2000s.

Most recently, its knowledge services have formed part of a major programme, Mobilising Knowledge for Development (MK4D). Funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), and coordinated by IDS, MK4D aims to increase the sharing and use of research knowledge in policy and practice to address global poverty and injustice.

Phase One of MK4D ran from April 2005 to December 2009. Its main objective was to enhance informed decision-making by those in a position to influence change through targeted intermediary and knowledge-sharing activities. Over the course of the programme, we strengthened our ability to analyse our own intermediary practice and analyse its contribution to development outcomes. We began to take a wider view and increased our networking and partnering across the sector.

Together with our partners, we learnt key strategic lessons about the constraints facing research uptake and identified actions we could take together to address them.

Key lessons shared

On October 30th 2009, we hosted a workshop at IDS to share and discuss some of the key lessons identified from the Phase One of the MK4D programme¹ and to outline the new directions planned for Phase Two. Participants included donors, staff, peers and partners of MK4D from as far afield as Bangladesh, Philippines, India, Malawi and South Africa. At the workshop, key lessons were presented, questioned and validated, and recommendations were made for Phase Two of the programme.

Through analysis of interviews with MK4D staff, feedback from partners and others active in the research communication sector, and through synthesis of MK4D documentation, a set of key lessons from Phase One were identified to be shared at the workshop. These lessons were clustered under three themes:

- **Access to research is not enough**
We learnt that we had been placing too much emphasis on supplying services and products and not enough on outcomes; the process of mediating research information and creating spaces for debate is key for research uptake. Intermediaries need to stimulate demand for research and support the development of stakeholders' skills to search for, evaluate and use it.
- **Thinking strategically about audiences and their needs**
We learnt that we needed to articulate our intended outcomes and assumptions before deciding on priority target audiences and how to respond to their needs. Marketing and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) provide us with rich sources of intelligence about our audiences, but innovating and adapting takes time and space.
- **Intermediaries: their capacities and collaboration**
From sharing our own and listening to our partners' experiences, we learnt that the effectiveness of intermediaries can be enhanced by forming a coherent sector. However, there are challenges in finding common strands amongst a wide diversity of approaches, developing a shared language and terminology, and the lack of a space hinders collaboration and the identification of good practice.

We also learnt that intermediaries need to go beyond the familiar repository role if they want to inform policy and practice stakeholders: adopting proactive communication and actively engaging stakeholders is vital. A further lesson was that intermediaries need certain characteristics to be effective and sustainable: a clear understanding of purpose; an appropriate implementation model; a favourable institutional model and enabled individuals; reputation and relationships; the ability to evolve, innovate and respond to opportunities.

¹ See pg. 26 for further details of the Mobilising Knowledge for Development (MK4D) Programme

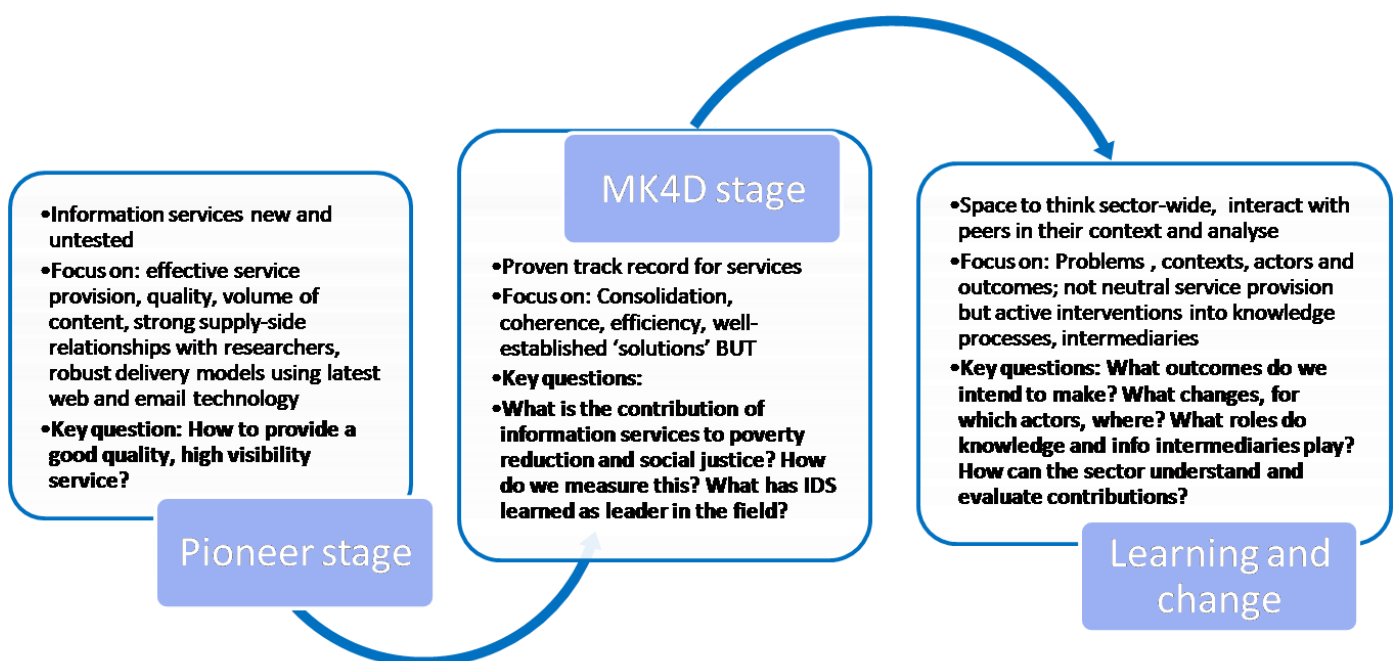
These lessons have informed our vision for Phase Two of MK4D: a stronger intermediary sector, better able to collaborate locally and globally, is vital to strengthen the use of research in development policy and practice.

This report presents the key lessons shared during the workshop. It is organised into six sections: the lessons identified from MK4D Phase One, a summary of the discussions that took place around them, further discussion on related strategic themes, the implications identified by the participants, conclusion and recommendations for the sector and for Phase Two of MK4D.

2. Lessons identified from MK4D Phase One

Participants were welcomed by a video on the proliferation of information² and then the event opened in plenary with an introduction by IDS Director, Lawrence Haddad.

This was followed by a presentation from Interim Head of Knowledge Services, Isabel Vogel, giving the background to MK4D Phase One and outlining the new directions of Phase Two. The presentation provided an overview of the work of the IDS Knowledge Services during the last ten years. Key drivers and lessons at each stage were highlighted, showing how the sector-wide perspective and focus on intermediaries as key actors for research uptake had emerged to inform MK4D Phase Two:



Participants then circulated between three thematic “stations” where the key lessons identified under each theme were presented. These were illustrated by a personal story from one of the MK4D staff and a display of related publications. The presentations were each followed by a short discussion among the group.

² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cL9Wu2kWwSY>

Theme 1 - Access to research is not enough

Presented by Julie Brittain (Head of Library), Liz Allcock (Eldis Editor) and Emilie Wilson (Eldis Editor)

Key lesson 1.1: We had been placing too much emphasis on supplying services/products and not enough on outcomes; the process of mediating research information and creating spaces for debate is key to encouraging research uptake

MK4D has developed a range of products and services that are highly used and appreciated, however, during discussions and reflections with IDS researchers, our partners such as the Research Communications M&E Group³ and the I-K-Mediary Network (see Theme 3, page 8 for an outline of how this network came into being), who were thinking about the same issues as us, we realised that we needed to focus much more on the medium to long term impact of our work.

Case studies collected through our monitoring and evaluation activity made it clear that though providing access to information continued to be really important, we could make more impact through engaging in debates and working more closely with partners on selection and co-production of materials. We developed a Theory of Change that helped to clarify our thinking and to assist us in refocusing our work which underpins the next phase of the MK4D programme.

Examples of direction in our work involving research information mediation and creating spaces for debate include:

'Joto Afrika', a publication developed through partnership between id21 and Kenya-based Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN). It focuses on climate change adaptation and is written entirely by African researchers and practitioners to help NGOs and local government make better-informed decisions on how farmers might cope with the effects of climate change <http://www.alin.net/index.php?page=joto-africa>

The **Eldis Community**, a professional networking site which facilitates debate and the exchange of information among its 6000+ members, most of whom work in development. This project, combined with our drive to decentralise and take a more networked approach, led to the Malawi Development Exchange, a partnership between IDS and the National Library Service of Malawi through which Malawian research information is sourced and hosted online at <http://community.eldis.org/malawi>

These examples were supplemented by a staff story about the evolution of BRIDGE Cutting Edge Packs⁴. Engagement with stakeholders during the development of the pack has become a key feature of the production process and has led to greater influence of the publications.

³ Research Communications M&E Group is an informal network which was formed as a way of sharing experiences and challenges relating to the monitoring and evaluation of development research communications programmes in the UK. For further details see www.ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/about-us/evaluation/research-communications-mande-group

⁴ Cutting Edge Packs provide accessible overviews of the latest thinking on a gender theme and summaries of the most useful related resources. See www.bridge.ids.ac.uk

Key Lesson 1.2: Intermediaries need to stimulate demand for research information and support development of skills to search for and use it; providing access to research for decision-makers is not enough to ensure research uptake and use.

Many people recognise that the proliferation of information available via the Internet has resulted in individuals needing help to determine quality and find relevant information buried among the mass of available information. Although we already meet this need by repackaging and synthesizing “good” information it assumes our target audiences are able to find us in their online searches.

Several recent and important publications have particularly focused on the need for researchers to develop information skills. These, together with BLDS’ experience of new international students who initially struggle to use library resources, and internal thinking and reflection, drove us to include within our Theory of Change, the need to stimulate demand for information. This thinking also led to responses such as developing a guidebook to help people find development information online more easily⁵, and information literacy training.

A staff story illustrated how our thinking has evolved to recognise the importance of context as well as incentives to search for and use information, and how we have piloted courses to test this thinking among Ghanaian research and communication staff and IDS postgraduate students⁶, many of whom were already development practitioners. With the students we incorporated a reflective and participatory approach and looked at both skills and motivation to use information as well as embedding the course in the curriculum.

We have learnt some key lessons about effectiveness from these initiatives and reflection, and from participating in information literacy training run by others, including:

- Information literacy training must be embedded in real experience and contextualised for the local environment.
- Information literacy more than skills transfer. It is about behaviour change (unlearning of old habits, for example), and we can and should learn from theories and methodologies of behaviour change.
- We need to understand the incentives participants have to use good quality information, and think about these when designing training (and selecting participants).

⁵ Hurst, G. and Brown, C. (2006) A Good Place to Start: the IDS Knowledge Services guide to finding development information online

⁶ Students were studying the IDS MA in Participation, Power and Social Change

Theme 2 - Thinking strategically about audiences and their needs

Presented by Cheryl Brown (SLI Marketing Coordinator) and Sandra Baxter (id21 Editor)

Key Lesson 2.1: We learnt that we needed to articulate our intended outcomes and assumptions before deciding on priority target audiences and how to respond to their needs

Developing a Theory of Change for the IDS Knowledge Services was a pivotal piece of work for Phase One of MK4D. It required us to review the purpose of all of our products and services and articulate a hypothesis of how their use, by specific types of people, would lead to reducing poverty. To produce the Theory of Change, we reviewed the literature about research to policy, drew on our own research about our target audiences and how they use information, external and internal evaluation findings, and sought feedback from research colleagues in IDS and elsewhere⁷.

By articulating our assumptions about who we were trying to reach and what they might use our services for, we were able to develop a methodology for identifying target audiences that responded to the particular concerns of being an information intermediary that is also pursuing particular development outcomes⁸. This standard approach has been applied to all of the products and services and has enabled us to create country-specific marketing plans that promote the most appropriate offerings to target audiences in each country, and this has proven very effective. The Theory of Change and target audience methodology demonstrated to us the value of having dedicated staff for M&E and marketing who worked together and used the same assumptions to guide their planning and implementation. For example, by using the same categories for target audiences and users, we are able to analyse M&E data to learn how effective we are at reaching target audiences and the relevance and usefulness of our services to them.

This outcome-based thinking has underpinned a lot of our work in Phase One, including our capacity development and collaboration with other organisations and informed the design of Phase Two. During the next phase, the new Impact and Learning Team⁹ will be able to test these assumptions and we will be doing more work on how to measure impact.

Key Lesson 2.2: Marketing and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) provide us with a rich source of intelligence about our audiences but it takes time and space to feel able to innovate in response.

A challenge that online intermediaries experience is distance from their users, and here we have found that marketing research and M&E can provide ideas about how to increase reach and help us learn about new needs and new users. However it is not a simple matter for existing intermediaries to respond to these insights. In our experience and from discussions with our peers, we have identified various reasons why change can be slow to happen.

⁷ Downie, A. (2008) From Access to Action: Impact Pathways for the IDS Knowledge Services

⁸ Brown, C. (2009) Who are we aiming to reach? A briefing paper and action plan for selecting target groups for the IDS Knowledge Services

⁹ In Phase Two of MK4D, the Strategic Learning Initiative will be reorganised as the Impact and Learning Team (ILT), located under the IDS Communications Team. The new ILT will be partly-funded through the MK4D programme to continue to play a support role in innovation and new product development through marketing, M&E and learning.

A key inhibitor is having indicators that focus on large numbers of users rather than qualitative indicators. Where an intermediary has large numbers of existing users, this can create a risk-averse culture and promote an emphasis on systems and standardisation. Another challenge to innovation can be commitments to production targets; to respond to the opportunities identified from engagement with users, one either has to create new products or services or ignore them because of limited resources. Nevertheless, changes have happened during Phase One as a result of our increased understanding of our audiences, including an increased commitment to print and CD-Rom products and our new focus on information literacy. One way that change has been enabled is through staff championing individual ideas and bringing market intelligence into the organization from their engagement with users at conference and field trips.

This thematic session concluded with the presenters sharing a staff story that pulled together the ideas presented including the value of meeting users, the constraints experienced in trying to respond to this learning and to opportunities, and how effective marketing activities and products have been when their design is based on a good understanding of specified target audiences' needs.

Theme 3 – Intermediaries: their capacities and collaboration

Presented by Catherine Fisher (SLI Capacity Development Coordinator) and members of the I-K-Mediary Network Core Group¹⁰

Key Lesson 3.1: Information and knowledge intermediaries play a key role in supporting evidence-based decision making, and their effectiveness can be improved by forming a coherent sector. This, however, presents certain challenges: the variety of approaches taken by the actors, the need for a common language and a well-resourced space to enable collaboration, sharing of ideas and experiences, and identification of good practice.

This lesson emerged from SLI work on research, monitoring and evaluation, marketing and particularly capacity development. Our commitment to capacity development required us to share what we had learned through delivering the range of IDS Knowledge Services with others. This led us to ask: what do we know and who would be interested?

As we investigated these questions, we found that there are an increasing number of information and knowledge services, most of which are created in isolation from each other, some of which are succeeding while others are struggling, there is little learning or reflection about what enables success or causes failure. There is not an established body of knowledge in this area on which people can draw, many people coming into intermediary roles have little guidance on which to base their actions, misunderstandings about the nature and demands of the role are prevalent among key stakeholders.

In response, we convened a small workshop in 2007 to explore the value of making connections between individuals and organisations playing intermediary roles. Out of this workshop, the I-K-Mediary Group (later re-named Network) was formed. IDS collaborated with South African group member the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to organise a conference and reconvene this

¹⁰ This group comprises members of the I-K-Mediary Network who have volunteered to take on an organising role for the network.

group in Pretoria, South Africa, in 2008, and the Network met for the 3rd time in 2009¹¹. The group has solidified into a cohesive network with dual objectives of improving intermediary work through learning and collaboration and building understanding of intermediary contribution among broader stakeholders.

As well as the ongoing development of the I-K-Mediary Network, other outcomes include:

- greater recognition of intermediaries in thinking on policy processes for example recent work by the RAPID¹² programme
- discussions at the KM4Dev¹³ workshop 2009
- recognition of the importance of intermediaries in the climate change sector

The importance of strengthening the sector is a key theme in the MK4D Phase Two proposal.

Story from Jennifer Liguton, Philippine Institute for Development Studies¹⁴, founding member of the I-K-Mediary Network

My story relates to the value of collaboration amongst intermediaries. Two months ago, a group of members of the I-K-Mediary Network decided to solicit funding for collaboration focusing specifically on the South East and South Asia region. Regional members got together to develop useful collaboration ideas. We came up with interesting areas e.g. being a repository to engage with different stakeholders, policy briefs, capacity building etc. We agreed that there was room to involve other groups at a regional level and hope to create a sub-network drawing in new institutions and building on activities. We created a concept note which was well received by IDRC¹⁵ and we have been asked to submit a proposal.

Key Lesson 3.2: Intermediaries can play a range of different roles: if they want to inform policy and practice processes they need to go beyond the familiar repository approach and adopt a role of proactive communication and engagement with stakeholders or collaborate with others who can play that role.

This lesson emerged from a combination of theoretical and practical reflection work within IDS and greater opportunities for intermediaries to discuss and compare their work with others. Important internal work in this area was the creation of a Theory of Change for the IDS Knowledge services and participation in the IDS seminar series on exploring IDS's capacity for influence. Opportunities to discuss and compare roles played by other intermediaries were provided by the I-K-Mediary Network and the Locating the Power of In-Between conference¹⁶ in South Africa, 2008, which aimed to identify the range of contributions intermediaries can make in broader debates about policy processes.

Looking at our own work and comparing it with others enabled us to identify that there are different types of engagement in policy processes. The experience of I-K-Mediary Network member

¹¹ Reports from these two meetings are available from www.ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/strategic-learning-initiative/i-k-mediary-group/publications

¹² The Research and Policy in Development programme at the Overseas Development Institute, London.

¹³ Knowledge Management for Development (KM4Dev) is a community of international development practitioners with an interest in knowledge management and knowledge sharing issues and approaches.

¹⁴ <http://www.pids.gov.ph/>

¹⁵ The International Development Research Centre, see www.idrc.ca

¹⁶ See the conference website at <http://powerofinbetween.wordpress.com/>

D.Net¹⁷ in Bangladesh shared below, was influential in helping to contrast different approaches and contributions to policy influence and to stimulate discussion amongst intermediaries and stakeholders. Their approach has inspired other members of the I-K-Mediary Network, who, in turn, have drawn on IDS skills to develop their work in this area.

Story from Ananya Raihan, D.Net Bangladesh, inaugural member of I-K-Mediary Network

D.Net started in 2001 as a repository. We didn't recognise ourselves as intermediaries then. Our purpose was to make research more efficient and accessible, and reduce the cost of searching. We then moved to second stage, we pushed ourselves, fed into advocacy groups e.g. minimum wage campaign in 2004 inspired us and helped the decision making process for advocacy groups. We gradually took steps to influence policy. We identified the value of a continuous process of feeding into policy spaces on thematic areas. This insight inspired the briefing service, *Protifolon*, which was developed in collaboration with IDS through a secondment of IDS staff to D.Net.

Key Lesson 3.3: We have learnt that there are certain characteristics which intermediaries, including ourselves, need to deliver information services effectively and sustainably: a clear understanding of one's purpose; an appropriate implementation model; a favourable institutional model and enabled individuals; the necessary reputation and relationships; the ability to evolve, innovate and spot and respond to opportunities.

This lesson was generated by applying latest thinking on capacity development to the work of intermediaries. Characteristics were identified through analysis and reflection on our own capacities and characteristics as well as through our capacity development, knowledge-sharing and networking activities with other intermediaries.

A key insight generated in this period was that information and knowledge based development interventions are often seen as simple, unproblematic, technical programmes and are not subject to the amount of thought, planning and scrutiny given to other development interventions. We identified that this often led to the development of "well-defined solutions for ill-defined problems"¹⁸ and design of effective initiatives required a clear understanding of purpose.

The techno-centric understanding of information and knowledge interventions also tends to promote a limited understanding of the range of factors involved in delivering an effective service, where attention is focussed on specific tools, tasks, and skills rather than considering the wider systems within which the service and the team that deliver it are located. The core characteristics thus go beyond thinking about skills and hardware to take a broader approach.

Identification of characteristics has been an iterative process but this approach informed the design and emphasis of the I-K-Mediary Network which focus on building understanding and critical thinking and broader sector strengthening rather than transfer of models and skills. It has also informed the implementation of IDS decentralization pilots and the capacity development approach in the MK4D Phase Two proposal which looks at sector strengthening and fostering innovation within the sector.

¹⁷ The Development Research Network, see www.dnet-bangladesh.org/

¹⁸ Catherine Fisher quoted during DFID/RIU Seminar on Science Journalism (p.11 of the report of the meeting, written by F. Almond, November 2008).

3. Discussion of the Lessons Identified

The presentations of the lessons outlined above were followed by a short discussion by each of the groups. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences, ask questions and challenge or concur with the lessons. The three rounds of discussion are synthesised below under each of the three themes.

Discussion of Theme 1: Access to research is not enough

Participants recognised the challenge of increasing demand for research and have employed a variety of tactics to meet this such as convening different stakeholders (civil society, students, government, etc) for research discussions and identifying policy implications so that research is used more for decision-making. The lesson identified about the need to consider context was reinforced by several participants and the staff story about using outreach activities to make a difference to uptake of products resonated with the groups.

Building relationships between different stakeholders and facilitating debate seems to be key to increasing demand e.g. between researchers and the media. The responsibility and the challenge of stimulating demand were explored. Alongside repeated comments about the need for marketing and outreach, one participant argued that users need to be encouraged to articulate their information needs, and take ownership of their search for and use of information, rather than intermediaries assuming full responsibility. This could be facilitated through raising awareness of what the issues are. Participants called for more emphasis on inviting people to express what information they want to have access to in order to understand what there is demand for, and to take practical action in response.

Participants shared the challenge of being brokers of information and, in particular, issues of quality control. Presenting multiple views, for example, can have a positive impact, but other user groups prefer a single view to avoid confusion. Also intermediaries can experience difficulties in working with multiple stakeholders and partnerships with a more neutral collaborator can be helpful in that situation. The difficulties of measurement were also discussed, including the opportunities to learn from tracking use of websites.

The concept of information literacy was discussed, and the multiple ways in which the term is understood. Participants considered how it applied to audio and visual information, and newer forms of information such as blogs. The discussion also considered the skills needed to create and co-create knowledge.

Discussion of Theme 2: Thinking strategically about audiences and their needs

Several participants agreed with the difficulty and frustration involved in balancing the workload of delivering a service or doing research communication, with finding time to identify needs, reflect and respond to opportunities. However, for Phase Two of MK4D to succeed, time needs to be allocated to building relationships, reflecting and responding and this implies a requirement to rethink structure in order to be more responsive. One participant commented that the “Mobilising” in MK4D means building relationships together, and collective working.

Impact and measurement was discussed in all of the groups and there was general agreement that different stakeholders, and even different members of a stakeholder group, require different measures e.g. numbers and examples of impact and have different understandings of effectiveness e.g. customer satisfaction as opposed to development outcomes. There was a call for a sector-wide theory of how knowledge contributes to poverty reduction to which intermediaries and research communicators could connect their role. Quantitative measures and assessments of value for money are still going to be needed but they also need to be humanized to meet the reporting needs of donors. Participants commented that these human stories would also act as a motivator for staff; feeling connected to real people.

The issue of translation and context featured in discussions, including the translation of concepts into simpler ideas. This led to agreement around the need to target one’s work and understand the target group’s needs. For example, people might understand English but their real work and discussions are not happening in English.

Recommendations included:

- Including an allocation of time for follow-up and reflection within outreach activities such as attending conferences
- Encouraging more conversations between peers about the sector’s capacity to respond collectively to opportunities and what is being learned
- Tracking requests from users and mapping them onto the Theory of Change to check its relevance
- Discussing measurement with donors to build mutual understanding of needs, timing and constraints
- Investigating ways of measuring attribution; can you embed traceable elements into a piece of information to see its impact after being shared through an intermediary?
- Continuing to do follow-up M&E activity after targeted marketing campaigns to assess the impact and relevance of the services and information being promoted

Discussion of Theme 3: Intermediaries: their capacities and collaboration

The I-K-Mediary Network¹⁹ was the main area of discussion under this theme with several participants sharing their experience of the network as members. Other participants were interested in the network's potential and the new directions it might take.

The value gained from the network to date included helping members to recognize the different roles that intermediaries play and redefining their own role from delivering a document repository to being an engaged service. Members have learned from each other and exchanged skills. This has helped some of them to deliver new services, for example, the 'Protifolon' collaboration between IDS and D.Net in Bangladesh.

The network's potential was seen as twofold: being a means of bridging actors, sectors and countries as intermediaries and building the confidence of the intermediary sector.

Participants discussed the strategic value of building the network; that it could enable institutions to understand context, results to be disseminated and translated in different countries and increase understanding of perspectives on particular policies and responses. In terms of how to build the network, the discussion explored whether it needed to be more visible, and whether its aim is to facilitate learning and capacity development among an unconnected membership, or to build a collective understanding of how to influence and make change happen.

The I-K-Mediary Network can act as a platform to share experiences about challenges and enable members to build on, rather than duplicate, each other's work. One participant asked whether intermediaries are ready to stop existing services if they are done better by other intermediaries and it was felt that the Network could play a role in making acting collaboratively the norm in the sector.

Participants felt that collaboration needed to be a bottom-up process rather than one facilitated by the centre. Network members shared their experience of collaborating on a regional proposal which led to the idea of an I-K-Mediary sub-regional network in South and South East Asia (see Key Lesson 3.1). There was interest in the potential to generate region specific learning using the network perhaps through regional sub-groups and meetings to discuss different issues and objectives. Funding partners tend to have regional objectives so this kind of regional coverage within the network could add to its potential. The I-K-Mediary Network also presents an opportunity for collaboration within sectors such as on HIV/AIDS. Participants also discussed how collaboration may be easier in areas of new interest (e.g. climate change) or of increased funding.

There was some confusion over whether the I-K-Mediary Network was itself an intermediary with ambitions of playing a broker role and being a knowledge sharing network. However, this is not the case: it is a peer network of individual intermediaries; a network of networks.

¹⁹ Membership of the I-K-Mediary Network is open to people directly involved in running an information knowledge service within development. See <http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/ikmediary-group>

Other recommendations and observations from this discussion included:

- Recruiting more members to the network so that it can become more visible (note the distinction between being a knowledge sharing network and a peer learning network).
- Organising a regional meeting of the network and making contact with potential member organizations in order to grow the South and South East Asian membership in particular.
- Taking decisions about the day-to-day operations of intermediary services as close to service delivery as possible. Too much high-level involvement can make delivery grind to a halt.
- Intermediaries have different locations within change processes and play different roles with different strengths that can be enhanced by working together.
- Intermediaries already play a bridging role but this could be strengthened and the I-K-Mediary Network could give them the confidence to do this.
- Ownership was discussed in this thematic area too; intermediaries need to be visible and to report their successes if they are to secure funding, but do not want to be seen as owning the process of knowledge sharing and uptake.

4. Open Space Discussions

This next session, an Open Space²⁰, was designed to give participants the opportunity to create their own agenda. During an Open Space, participants propose the questions and topics they are interested in discussing and nominate a place and time for these discussions to happen. Participants are then free to join whichever discussion they are interested in and move between them. Eleven sessions were nominated:

1. How do we strengthen monitoring and evaluation?
2. How to ensure use of information?
3. A unified theory of how information leads to change
4. How do we measure impact?
5. Measuring value for money
6. What do we do with the new opportunities we identify?
7. Role of media and debate
8. How do we make space for building long term relationships that are not formal partnerships?
9. How to promote diversity of ideas in different environments (i.e. those where plurality is more controversial)
10. Intermediaries: Relationship between collaboration, competition of services and specialisation; contributing to a public good
11. Challenging quality

Due to the nature of Open Space, some sessions merged into one, and not all of the proposed sessions took place or were documented. Those that were are summarised below.

Sessions 1, 4 and 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

A number of Open Spaces sought to discuss an aspect of M&E and were clustered into a single session. The participants explored how, for government-funded intermediaries, monitoring and proving impact are important for maintaining public confidence in what they (the public) are being asked to fund. However this means that documenting evidence is not enough, it must be communicated to the public. A scenario was presented where an overseas development minister was being interviewed on TV and being questioned why the government is funding a multi-million pound information programme; what could the minister say to justify this use of public money?

The issue of volume of usage vs. how information is being used, was discussed. Are there hierarchies of users and use? In the past, two kinds of use have been identified:

- a) conceptual shaping of ideas
- b) practical application

Participants discussed how ideas get taken up and how far away from one's actions can one begin to measure. If you look at an outcome can you track back to identify your input to that outcome? It was proposed that this might be possible to do collectively.

²⁰ More information on Open Space Technology is available from <http://www.openspaceworld.org/>

The issue of attribution was raised again; if knowledge is a process of synthesis, in order to attribute impact, you would need to break it back down into the original components. Even where one's work is cited, it could reflect different processes e.g. revelation (the reader did not know that), validation (the reader knew it and this supports it), rejection (the reader read it but did not agree), justification (this supports what the reader wanted to do anyway).

Session 3: A unified theory of how information leads to change

This session reflected on the experience of the Strategic Learning Initiative (SLI) in developing a Theory of Change for the IDS Knowledge Services which hypothesised how activities such as making research knowledge more accessible leads to better development outcomes. The group questioned why this process did not happen more often among intermediaries, and concluded that SLI had a rare opportunity to spend time reflecting on how change happens in this context for a specific set of intermediaries. The participants felt that rather than develop a single Theory of Change, it would be possible to develop a communications approach to logframes that could be used regardless of whether one was focusing on how information generates new ideas, is used in campaigning, or feeds into the "corridors of power".

The group observed that despite considerable research in this area, the thinking has not translated into simple tools that organisations can use. They also observed that there are a number of tools from the marketing and M&E fields that could be adapted for helping organisations to think about how change happens such as the Decision Making Process²¹. In SLI's experience of supporting other intermediaries, outcomes-based thinking needs to be facilitated. The discussion moved on to explore how one could replicate this facilitation.

The group proposed piloting an informal voluntary panel from among the intermediary and research communication community. The panel could be called upon to give input, ideally at the stage of developing concept notes, using a set of key questions to encourage outcomes-based thinking.

Session 6: What do we do with the new opportunities we identify?

This group sought to address the challenge highlighted in the thematic discussions; if an intermediary becomes aware of an opportunity, they either create additional products or ignore it because of limited resources. The participants were interested in how to support collaboration but be aware of the dangers of specializing, for example, being the organization labelled as good in a particular area carries the risk of reducing the motivation to improve.

The group made the following observations and recommendations:

- If everybody knew what everyone else was doing and what their strengths were it would be possible to refer work and opportunities to each other; one could also offer to help work it up into a practical idea.
- We could do more to draw on the products produced by others; if we learn that users are interested in audio materials, we should explore whether we can provide those of others before producing them ourselves.

²¹ For a summary of this theory, see www.tutor2u.net/business/marketing/buying_decision_process.asp

- Collaboration requires us to produce materials in a way that facilitates sharing and adaptation but this raises the challenge of demonstrating attribution.
- This requires a shift in attitude; we need to give up control, however the more you do that, the more M&E one needs to do in order to learn what impact the material has had.
- If we decide to discontinue a product, we could support a partner to take it on, but again, one needs to relinquish control for this to happen; the product may be reinvented and become more relevant if someone takes it over.

Session 10: Intermediaries - Relationship between collaboration, competition of services and specialisation; contributing to a public good

Observations from this discussion included:

- Intermediaries could co-operate more on publicising and cross-promoting each other's work
- Are donors trying to streamline intermediaries?
- More South-South cooperation is worth pursuing
- Donors are starting to encourage cooperation
- Multiple sources of information is good so we should not eliminate competition completely and some competition between intermediaries is good because it raises quality
- We should share knowledge of how to do things and share lists of resources more
- Better communications between intermediaries could avoid wasteful duplication

Session 11: Challenging quality

The discussion in this group covered the following areas:

- Quality of research vs. direct usefulness
- Quality is not the same as relevance
- Rigour should not be about packaging
- Challenging our own understanding of quality
- Quality: nature of evidence
- Quality for one person is not the same for another
- Quality: reputation/authority, validation/credibility
- How do you balance different perceptions and definitions of quality?
- Is policy about evidence? How do we address the issue that policy is not based on evidence?
- Quality in terms of choice: evaluating different criteria for selecting credible publications
- Quality: different validation processes

5. Implications for the Intermediary and Research Communication Sectors and Phase Two of MK4D

The workshop concluded with a plenary session where participants reflected on the discussions they had been involved in throughout the day and what the implications of these might be for themselves, the intermediary and research communication sectors and especially for Phase Two of MK4D.

Implications for the intermediary and research communication sectors

Putting more emphasis on M&E and responding to demand

A key theme during the workshop discussions was the need to take M&E more seriously and try new approaches to it, ideally in collaboration. A key question to answer will be how to report on the economic returns of services. Relating to this, participants commented on the importance of having a feedback loop. Efforts can often be focused on the solution or on supply without necessarily being fully aware of needs or demand. One participant compared information intermediaries to bakeries, suggesting they might be providing “iced-buns when what people really wanted was toast” or providing what people want but not delivering them in the desired way. The sector should look to “be what the user needs”.

In order for intermediaries to gain a sense of the impact of their services and products, it is important that they do M&E and identify user needs and demand. One participant mentioned how traditional logframes did not have all the layers necessary for information and communications work.

Exploring research quality and the importance of context

The first challenge experienced in discussing quality is the lack of a shared definition. A number of criteria were suggested for how one might assess the quality of research including the research methodology, its presentation (how the research is reframed or packaged) and the outcomes it generates. One participant pointed to the UK’s Higher Education Research Council for Education’s emphasis on rigour as an example of identifying and highlighting quality. It begs the question: is quality defined differently in different contexts? It is in the nature of intermediary work to deal with lots of information from different sources, so quality can mean very different things and will need very different indicators. Is quality about the collection as it relates to the service’s purpose rather than about a single item?

Participants were also keen for intermediaries to consider drawing on more informal sources of knowledge, for example, the content created through blogs. This approach could also be a way of identifying like-minded intermediaries and for making connections across sectors. Blogs and other Web 2.0 tools²² can also be used as a means of understanding different contexts (as ‘listening

²² Broadly speaking, Web 2.0 tools are those that enable users of the internet to take control over the information they view online and enhance their ability to adapt, create and share content. See <http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html> for an interesting discussion by the developers of the term Web 2.0.

posts' for monitoring what is happening in a particular area) and for reputation building. The challenge would be to use these tools while avoiding saturation.

Implications for Phase Two of MK4D

In addition to the implications and suggestions made for the intermediary and research communication sector, several more were identified by the participants specifically for IDS to consider during Phase Two of MK4D.

Developing awareness of the sector and the environment in which intermediaries operate

Intermediaries form part of an information chain however, MK4D could do more to work closely with other players in the chain, and this is something it should take into account during planning. How can the I-K-Mediary Network relate to non-public sector intermediaries, for example?²³

Thinking about co-creation, language and adapting to the local context

In the last year, MK4D learnt that while co-creation of content and products can help strengthen partnerships and increase local relevance, it also presents a number of challenges. Nevertheless, participants stressed the need to keep thinking about local language and adapting content and terminology to the context illustrating this with two examples from other intermediaries. The Philippine Institute for Development Studies introduced an information service entitled 'Economic Issue of the Day'²⁴ to illustrate the day-to-day application of economics issues aimed to engage local people in global debates. 'Protifolon', the policy brief series in Bangladesh created for local policymakers by D.Net and IDS, is now looking at being translated from English, in order to increase its reach and influence. Indeed, translating existing products into a locally relevant language is an important area for collaborative work.

Stimulating demand

MK4D was encouraged to take a close look at how to stimulate demand and let that influence the design and delivery of its services. Key to this is strengthening information literacy and information capability amongst MK4D's users and partners. One participant suggested looking at lessons from other sectors on behaviour change to understand how one might stimulate demand.

Evaluating and communicating the cost of services

Participants discussed the importance of informing donors of the cost and value of services in monetary terms and this should be something MK4D considers when identifying indicators and making funding applications.

²³ The I-K-Mediary Network planned to discuss collaboration over standard setting and establishing principles to reduce competition between intermediaries during their workshop the week after the Lesson Sharing Workshop took place.

²⁴ See <http://publication.pids.gov.ph/eid.phtml>

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The Lesson Sharing Workshop, and this report, presents some of the key lessons from Phase One of MK4D as identified by MK4D staff and some of the programme's partners. Throughout the day, the workshop participants played a valuable role in testing these lessons and relating them to their own experience.

Very few of the challenges that the MK4D staff faced during Phase One of the programme were unfamiliar to MK4D's donors, peers and partners and this workshop highlighted the need for and interest in working together to increase the collective understanding of these challenges and to find ways to address them.

The new phase of MK4D offers the opportunity for intermediaries and research communicators to work together. By building global collaboration and partnerships, MK4D aims to help the development of sector-wide learning on what works to stimulate demand for and use of research in policy and practice. By actively stimulating the sharing of knowledge and capacities amongst intermediaries and research communicators, MK4D aims to improve access to research knowledge, to strengthen its contextualisation and translation, and to strengthen our collective ability to make a real difference to the most pressing issues of poverty and injustice locally and globally. As this Lesson Sharing workshop closed, the participants made various practical recommendations, outlined below.

Recommendations for the intermediary and research communication sectors

- Review approaches to measuring change used in other sectors such as agriculture, health and social marketing²⁵.
- Look at work done by the British Library on return on investment²⁶.
- Run a workshop through the Research Communications M&E Group on an M&E research agenda and demonstrating value for money; draw on the I-K-Mediary Network in these discussions.
- Develop an adapted logframe or equivalent tool for evaluation of and reporting on information and communications work.
- Monitor the Research Excellence Framework²⁷ discussions around research quality, where research is being assessed according to validity, originality and significance.
- Explore how marketing and communications theory about quality and trust could be adapted to this context.
- Experiment with more informal online content sources to learn about the external environment and for connecting with others.
- Develop a collective definition of quality in relation to research and information.

²⁵ Social marketing is concerned with using approaches and theories from marketing, and other disciplines, to understand and influence behaviour change for the good of society.

²⁶ See 'Measuring Our Value', www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/increasingvalue/measuring.pdf

²⁷ The framework is being developed by The Higher Education Funding Council for England and partners, to assess the quality of research in UK higher education institutions, see www.hefce.ac.uk/Research/ref/

Recommendations for Phase Two of MK4D

- Map intermediaries as a first step towards gaining a better understanding of the sector (this activity has been included in Phase Two of MK4D).
- Pursue collaboration opportunities that enable content to be translated into local languages and contextualised to increase its reach and relevance; learn from Panos'²⁸ work in this area.
- Explore the production of an 'IDS Bulletin' or series of briefings on identifying issues in co-creation, etc. drawing on what others have done. Are we (the sector) good at this? What are some of the new ways of working, for example, production by wiki or combination of face-to-face, phone and wiki?
- Develop a range of channels for sharing information, informed by practical texts such as 'Digital habitats - stewarding technologies for communities'²⁹ a book about using different methods for sharing information; sometimes through tools and sometimes through different behaviour.
- Establish the connection between MK4D's products and the impact they have on people's livelihoods.
- Run a workshop to identify the typical stages in a Theory of Change relating to research uptake and support people to develop their theories.

Many participants continued their discussions, particularly the implications for how Phase Two of MK4D is planned and implemented, after the workshop ended. The discussion also informed the debate at subsequent events, such as the I-K-Mediary annual workshop. We hope that this will be the first of many events to bring together intermediaries, research communicators, donors and research users to reflect, share lessons and develop collective effectiveness across the intermediary sector.

²⁸ www.panos.org.uk

²⁹ By Wenger, White and Smith. <http://technologyforcommunities.com/>

Appendix 1: Agenda for the Lesson Sharing Workshop

Time	Programme/Agenda Item
09.30	Registration and Coffee
10.00	Welcome and introduction to the day and to participants Lawrence Haddad – Director, IDS
10.15	Overview of MK4D Phase One Isabel Vogel – Interim Head of Knowledge Services, IDS
10.30 *refreshments will be available during this session	Lesson sharing carousel Small groups discuss, critique and validate lessons at three thematic stations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to research is not enough • Measuring, marketing and audiences needs • Intermediaries: capacities and collaboration
12.30	Lunch/networking
13.30	Open Space-style group discussions Participants nominate issues, challenges and questions for discussion in parallel sessions.
14.45	Coffee Break
15.00	Implications for MK4D, the intermediary sector and donors Facilitated plenary discussion
15.45	Reflections and closing remarks
16.00	Refreshments/networking

Appendix 2: List of Participants

	Name	Job Title	Organisation	Country
1.	Abigail Mulhall	Acting Team Leader, Research Uptake	Department for International Development (DFID)	UK
2.	Ananya Raihan	Executive Director	Development Research Network (D.Net)	Bangladesh
3.	Andreas Schöner		Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	Switzerland
4.	Annie Hoban	Programme Manager, Relay	Panos	UK
5.	Carl Jackson	Programme Manager, Knowledge Partnerships	Institute of Development Studies (IDS)	UK
6.	Catherine Fisher	Capacity Development Coordinator, SLI	Institute of Development Studies (IDS)	UK
7.	Cheryl Brown	Acting Programme Manager, SLI	Institute of Development Studies (IDS)	UK
8.	Claire Grant- Salmon	Marketing Manager	SciDev.Net	UK
9.	Faye Reagon	Head of Information Services	Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)	South Africa
10.	Gabrielle Minkley	Programme Coordinator, SLI	Institute of Development Studies (IDS)	UK
11.	Heidi Meyer	Head of Information Management Division	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	Switzerland
12.	Hilde Thyness	Adviser, Education and Research Department	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)	Norway
13.	Isabel Vogel	Interim Head of Knowledge Services	Institute of Development Studies (IDS)	UK
14.	James Nguo	Regional Director	Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN)	Kenya
15.	Jenny Liguton	Director for Research Information	Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS)	Philippines
16.	Julie Brittain	Head of Library	Institute of Development Studies (IDS)	UK
17.	Lawrence Haddad	Director	Institute of Development Studies (IDS)	UK
18.	Liz Carlile	Director of Communications	International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)	UK
19.	Lynne Sergeant	Clearinghouse Manager	International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO	France

20.	Mary Waswa	Eldis Malawi Development Exchange Facilitator	National Library Service, Malawi	Malawi
21.	Megan Lloyd-Laney	Communications Advisor	DFID	UK
22.	Nick Perkins	Head of Communication	IDS	UK
23.	Shamprasad Pujar	Deputy Librarian	IGIDR	India
24.	Peter Burnett	Head of Library Development	INASP	UK
25.	Yaso Kunaratnam	Capacity Development Assistant, SLI	IDS	UK
26.	Liz Allcock	Research , Eldis	IDS	UK
27.	Emilie Wilson	Resource Guide Editor, Eldis	IDS	UK
28.	Sandra Baxter	Editor, id21	IDS	UK
29.	Paola Brambilla	Communications Assistant, BRIDGE	IDS	UK
30.	Alistair Scott	Manager, id21	IDS	UK
31.	Fatema Rajabali	Resource Guide Editor, Eldis	IDS	UK

*Additional MK4D staff also attended parts of the workshop

Appendix 3: Background to MK4D and Key Achievements

a) Background notes on MK4D

The MK4D programme has been funded by DFID through its Central Research Department (now DFID Research) since April 1st, 2005 to reduce global poverty and injustice by supporting more informed decision making by those in a position to influence change.

Most of the Knowledge Services at IDS have been supported by DFID since their outset and several are the result of DFID initiatives. For a number of years, support from DFID came from different departments in a series of individual grants and contracts. The first phase of MK4D brought together into one programme structure, several of these Knowledge Services. Initially these were:

British Library for Development Studies (BLDS) www.blds.ids.ac.uk

A specialist development library based at IDS

id21 www.id21.org

A service that focuses its online and print reporting on UK-funded development research, now part of Eldis

Eldis www.eldis.org

A gateway to online development information delivered by web, email and CD-Rom

BRIDGE www.bridge.ids.ac.uk

A specialist service supporting gender mainstreaming efforts with accessible information

The rationale for “bundling” the Services together was primarily to encourage coherence and efficiency between the services, but also to streamline administrative arrangements for DFID. New joint planning and reporting mechanisms were set up at IDS, and the combined funding allowed IDS to push ahead with developing a powerful new shared technical platform to host the various Knowledge Services websites, allowing easier interchange of content between services (‘Oryx’). The creation of the **Strategic Learning Initiative** www.ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/strategic-learning-initiative allowed us to strengthen and coordinate efforts in marketing, monitoring and evaluation, research and capacity building and gave us space to reflect on our experience and role as intermediaries.

Livelihoods Connect, a service facilitating knowledge sharing and networking to enable the practical implementation of sustainable livelihoods approaches, became part of the MK4D programme in 2005 and is now hosted on Eldis at www.eldis.org/go/topics/dossiers/livelihoods

The **Health and Development Information** team (HDI), which brings together work from across IDS on health and communication, joined the MK4D programme in 2007. <http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/hdi>

In May 2007 DFID agreed to extend the Programme by six months to allow time to digest and incorporate the results of:

- A combined Output to Purpose Review (OPR) of the MK4D Programme and external evaluation of Eldis, jointly commissioned by DFID and the Eldis donor group (funded by DFID and conducted by ITAD Ltd).
- A strategic review of the IDS Information Department being carried out during 2007.

- The emerging research strategy review being conducted within DFID/CRD, which at the time was expected to be completed by January 2008.

Two further extensions were awarded to take Phase One of MK4D up to 31 December 2009.

b) Feedback from users of the MK4D Knowledge Services during Phase One

On Eldis

“I have been able to find information offering many approaches to improving water sanitation in the developing world and lessons from other countries. This material has helped with my work. I use the knowledge to improve myself and apply what I have learned in my job. You cannot rely on what you already know and I can’t go back to school tomorrow so this is my way of learning more. I like to improve myself so that I can do things better.”

Project manager, international NGO, Sudan

On BRIDGE

“BRIDGE has improved my knowledge and changed my attitude... I stumbled across the BRIDGE website in 2008. At that time we were working on a proposal and some of the things that I learned from BRIDGE information were included in the concept paper and the proposal. It was very good timing. The concept note has been accepted and I am confident we will get the funds to implement the project.”

Programme officer, national NGO, Nigeria

On BLDS

“It has been enormously helpful in my efforts to introduce a more information-based approach to the work of the organisation... to promote the realisation that [we are] not just an isolated organisation, by supplying information from other parts of the world which people can identify with.”

Senior manager, NGO, South Africa

c) Key Achievements of Phase One of MK4D

Conceptualisation and promotion of the role of information and knowledge intermediaries in development which SLI formalised in the shape of the I-K-Mediary Network after hosting a workshop for 10 intermediary organisations. The I-K-Mediary Network, which we continue to coordinate includes 70 members from 28 organisations in 23 countries. We later co-convened “Locating the Power of In-Between” conference with HSRC in South Africa, July 2008 to explore the role of intermediaries with sector stakeholders. The third meeting of the I-K-Mediary Network took place in November 2009.

IDS was instrumental in setting up, and SLI (now Impact & Learning Team) continues to organise, the Research Communications Monitoring & Evaluation Group which aims to further thinking in this area through sharing experiences and stimulating discussion. This has resulted in visits from members to IDS to learn more about MK4D’s approach to monitoring and evaluation. In November 2007, DFID informed us that the group’s report, ‘Proving Our Worth’, was the most downloaded publication on their Research For Development (R4D) website.

Co-convened ‘Maximising the Impact of Development Research’ meeting at IDS bringing together donors and research communications partners to discuss how to coordinate activities. The report

from this event³⁰ was distributed widely as well as being used as a source for the DFID Research Strategy Working Paper on Research Communications.

Reach and impact: In 2008/09 we received more than 2.6 million visits to the MK4D websites (40-50 per cent from Southern countries) and we have more than 55,000 unique subscribers to email updates across MK4D. We have a core distribution of subscribers to print products of more than 35,000 people (id21 and BRIDGE combined) of which 80 per cent are from the South. Each publication is also distributed to additional readers through targeted mailing lists. In the past two years we have distributed more than 16,000 copies of Eldis OnDisc to a mainly Southern audience.

MK4D has also accrued examples of a deeper level of impact of its products and services, through M&E coordinated by SLI. Examples range from policy – informing SIDA’s gender strategy in Moldova; to practice – basic literacy radio programmes in Nigeria and water rights in Malawi. As part of their Cutting Edge pack development and dissemination, BRIDGE hosted a high level panel on Gender and Indicators with UNDP in New York and the team was invited to present preliminary arguments of its Trade and Migration Cutting Edge Packs to the OECD/DAC GenderNet³¹. id21’s ‘insights’ publications have been used to advocate for overlooked issues to be included in debates e.g., raising the profile of palliative care at the International AIDS 2006 Conference; and have been referenced as evidence in discussions of the UK Parliament Select Committee on International Development³².

Introduction of a range of new products and services to respond to an increased understanding of development actors’ needs included:

- The BLDS online reference desk, providing the same level of expert enquiry support offered to visitors to the physical library
- RPC-Direct, a dedicated information service for DFID Research Programme Consortia, provided by BLDS
- Eldis OnDisc, making Eldis abstracts and the associated full text publications available to users through a database delivered by CD-Rom. We have secured permission to make publications available to users with low-connectivity, from 350 organisations ranging from the World Bank to small organisations such as FarmAfrica
- ‘A Good Place to Start’, a pocket-sized guide to online development information sources for those lacking experience in searching and evaluating information
- The Livelihoods Network, bringing members together face-to-face and online through the Eldis Community Site.
- Non-English editions of printed publications, e.g. BRIDGE publications in French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Portuguese
- Experimenting with the new generation of online publishing and collaboration tools collectively known as Web 2.0 and incorporating successful elements into our websites
- ‘How We...’ publication series, sharing our experiences and providing practical information and useful ideas for people who design and implement research-based information services
- Pilot products with partners e.g. ‘Protifolon’ and ‘Joto Afrika’

³⁰ Available from www.iiied.org/pubs/display.php?o=17003IIED

³¹ See www.oecd.org/dac/gender

³² For example, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmintdev/66/66we04.htm

Building a sophisticated understanding of how to adapt and apply marketing, M&E and strategic planning principles, tools and techniques to the unique context of online intermediaries in development through SLI's work. This includes developing a new market segmentation approach that is more relevant to intermediaries and a mapping tool to help unpack how information and communications projects affect development processes and outcomes. This latter tool created a lot of interest during our workshops at the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society in Tunisia. We have since refined and used it during capacity development activities with the I-K-Mediary Network members, and other partners.

MK4D received a positive assessment from its Output to Purpose Review together with many useful recommendations, of which the large majority have already been implemented. The reviewers stated they were

“impressed by the quality and quantity of information products from the projects, and the professionalism of the staff... The projects produce very high quality products, which their users value highly... The MK4D projects continue to serve a significant function in development. Indeed the projects, alongside other information services, such as SciDev.Net³³, have proven the importance of “info-mediaries” in the development process. These are useful and important services for development, and dealing in global public goods, should continue to be funded.”

³³ The Science and Development Network at www.scidev.net

Appendix 4: Related Publications

The publications listed below are a selection of those used during the workshop to illustrate the lessons identified from MK4D Phase One.

BRIDGE (2007) *UNDP/BRIDGE Expert Panel Discussion on Gender Sensitive Indicators and Measurements of Change, 51st Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women*, Brighton: IDS

http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports_general.htm

Brown, C. (forthcoming) *Who are we aiming to reach? A briefing paper and action plan for selecting target groups for the IDS Knowledge Services*, Brighton: IDS

Brown, C. (2009) *Synthesis of feedback on the I-K-Mediary Group from its members* (internal document)

Brown, C. (2009) *Making and Keeping Friends: Advice on how to develop and maintain strategic relationships*, Brighton: IDS

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

Demetriades, J., Moser, A. and Jolly, S. (2007) *UNDP/BRIDGE E-discussion Summary: Measuring Gender Equality*, Brighton: IDS

http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports_general.htm

Downie, A. (2008) *From Access to Action: Impact Pathways for the IDS Knowledge Services*, Brighton: IDS

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

Fisher, C. (forthcoming) *Five characteristics of successful knowledge and information intermediary organisations*

Fisher, C. (2010) *How research brokers and intermediaries support evidence-based pro-poor policy and practice: An analysis of the Locating the Power of In-between Conference, 1-2 July 2008, Pretoria, South Africa*, Pretoria: HSRC

http://www.hsrc.ac.za/Research_Publication-21525.phtml

Fisher, C. and Kunaratnam, Y. (2007) *Between ourselves: the new generation of information & knowledge intermediaries*, Brighton: IDS

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/strategic-learning-initiative/i-k-mediary-group/publications>

Hepworth, M. and Brittain, J. (2008), 'A method for the design, delivery and evaluation of an information literacy intervention for development workers studying participation, power and social change', 75th IFLA General Conference and Council conference proceedings, Milan, Italy (section 94) <http://www.ifla.org/annual-conference/ifla75/programme2009-en.php>

Horton, F. W. (2008) *Understanding Information Literacy: A Primer*, Paris: UNESCO
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?catno=157020>

Hurst, G. and Brown, C. (2006) *A Good Place to Start: the IDS Knowledge Services Guide to Finding Development Information Online*, Brighton: IDS
<http://www.ntd.co.uk/idsbookshop/details.asp?id=946>

I-K-Mediary Network (2009) *Intermediary Impact: Case studies of intermediary influence*, Brighton: IDS
<http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/strategic-learning-initiative/i-k-mediary-group/publications>

Lowery, C. and Brown, C. (Ed.) (2006) *Five cross-country market research report thematic overviews considering how people: access, consume, search for and disseminate research information, and use it to influence policy-makers*. Brighton: IDS
<http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/knowledge-services/strategic-learning-initiative/publications/other-research>

The Research Information Network (2008) *Mind the skills gap: Information-handling training for researchers*, London: RIN
<http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/researcher-development-and-skills/mind-skills-gap-information-handling-training-researchers>

UCL (2008) *Information behaviour of the researcher of the future* (ciber briefing paper), London: UCL
<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/resourcediscovery/googlegen.aspx>