

TOPIC GUIDE ON
**COMMUNICATION
AND GOVERNANCE**

Claire Mcloughlin and Zoë Scott
March 2011



CommGAP

Towards A New Agora

Innovative Solutions for Governance



Governance and Social
Development Resource Centre

TOPIC GUIDE ON
COMMUNICATION AND GOVERNANCE

Claire Mcloughlin and Zoë Scott

Produced in collaboration with the Communication for Governance and
Accountability Program (CommGAP)

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide introduces some of the best recent literature on the role of communication in governance. It highlights the major critical debates surrounding the relationship between communication, government accountability and responsiveness, and state-society relations in developing countries. It is intended primarily as a reference for policymakers, and highlights practical guidance, lessons learned and case studies on supporting the development of independent and plural media systems, increasing access to information, and using communication tools in governance reform processes across a range of contexts, including fragile and conflict-affected states. New publications and emerging issues will be regularly incorporated.

The guide was written by Claire Mcloughlin (GSDRC) and Zoe Scott (GSDRC) in April 2010, and was updated by Huma Haider (GSDRC) in March 2011. It was produced in close collaboration with the World Bank's Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP). The GSDRC appreciates the expert contributions made by Antonio Lambino and Anne-Katrin Arnold (CommGAP), Pippa Norris (Kennedy School of Government), and Gerry Power (BBC). Comments or document suggestions can be sent to Claire Mcloughlin: Claire@gsdrc.org

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ABOUT THE GSDRC

The Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) provides cutting-edge knowledge services on demand and online. It aims to help reduce poverty by informing policy and practice in relation to governance, conflict and social development. The GSDRC receives core funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).

www.gsdrc.org

ABOUT THE COMMUNICATION FOR GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM (COMM GAP)

The Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), a global program at the World Bank, seeks to confront the challenges inherent in the political economy of development. By applying innovative communication approaches that improve the quality of the public sphere – by amplifying citizen voice; promoting free, independent, and plural media systems; and helping government institutions communicate better with their citizens – the program aims to demonstrate the power of communication principles, processes and structures in promoting good and accountable governance, and hence better development results. CommGAP is funded through a multi-donor trust fund. This fund's founding donor is the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).

www.worldbank.org/commgap

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THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN GOVERNANCE

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INTRODUCTION: COMMUNICATION AND THE GOVERNANCE AGENDA

Whilst the role of communication in supporting democratic development and stimulating economic growth is increasingly recognised in international policy statements, in practice communication remains a relatively under-prioritised area of the so-called ‘good governance’ agenda. Some attribute this to a lack of robust evidence demonstrating communication’s impact on governance, others argue it is more fundamentally a question of whether support to communication – which typically encompasses the development of an independent media sector, improving access to information, and the strategic use of media and political communication tools to influence behavior and social change – is a legitimate area for donor funding, given the often highly political nature of such interventions. What is clear is that the available research on the role of communication in governance is fragmented across multiple disciplines with often conflicting priorities (including political science, communications, media studies, and development studies). At the same time, there has been a dearth of practical guidance available to policymakers on understanding and using communication in governance reform.

In spite of its relative under-prioritisation in development assistance, few dispute the power of communication, and in particular the catalytic role of the media, in influencing governance relationships and processes: communication is widely seen as vital for connecting states with society, facilitating inclusive political systems, giving ‘voice’ to poor and marginalised groups, and enabling citizen participation and social accountability. Communication advocates also argue that the strategic use of political communication tools and methodologies can influence the attitudes, opinions and behaviour of key stakeholders and secure the political will necessary for reforms to be successful on the ground. With the recent rise of the fragile states agenda, there has been increased academic and donor interest in how communication can contribute to state-building by improving state citizen relationships and helping to (re)build social contracts in conflict affected states.

Nevertheless, legitimate questions remain regarding the role of donors in supporting communication in pursuit of good governance, not least what type of support is likely to be effective, what choices have to be made between supporting different types of media, and how to ensure interventions in this area are demand-led, sustainable and ultimately in the public interest; particularly the interests of the poor and marginalised. Overall, many studies conclude there is a need for better understanding of the

circumstances under which communication, and in particular the media, can be a powerful force for positive, developmental change, and why in other cases it can be a more malign force capable of blocking pro-poor reform, engendering political violence, and sustaining undemocratic political systems.

Wilson. M., Warnock, K., and Schoemaker, M., 2007, 'At the Heart of Change: The Role of Communication in Sustainable Development', Panos Institute, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3717>

Why is communication essential for sustainable development? This report argues that information, communication, the media and ICTs are powerful agents in giving 'voice' to the poor. Open, participatory information and communication processes contribute to inclusive politics, better governance, a dynamic civil society, and to rapid, fairer economic growth. However, communication must be put at the service of the poor – at community, national and international levels. A wide-ranging, holistic and strategic approach to information and communication challenges is needed, plus – crucially – political will to address them.

Lines, K. 2009, 'Governance and the Media: A Survey of Policy Opinion', BBC World Service Trust, London

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/pdf/governance_media_survey_April09.pdf

How important is the media considered to be to governance and is it thought to be receiving the appropriate level of attention? Has the level of attention changed, and if so, are there any indicators that illustrate the shift? This report analyses current thinking and practice regarding the role of the media in relation to governance outcomes. It finds some evidence to support the perception of greater recognition by policymakers of the media's central role in development. However, there is an 'engagement gap' between the value assigned to the media's role by policymakers and the practical provision made for it in development planning, thinking and spending.

DOES COMMUNICATION MATTER FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE?

A key aspect of governance is how citizens, leaders and public institutions relate to each other in order to make change happen. Without communication structures and processes which enable the two-way exchange of information between state and citizens, it is difficult to imagine how states can be responsive to public needs and expectations. Crucially, two-way communication allows citizens to monitor the state's activities, to enter into dialogue with the state on issues that matter to them, and to influence political outcomes. Many political scientists believe this encourages the development of trust between state and society, and is a foundation of state legitimacy over the long-term.

Communication and state capability, accountability and responsiveness

On a practical level, communication can be seen as essential to the development of state capability, accountability and responsiveness in the following ways:

- **Capability:** Consultation and dialogue between state and citizens can in principle improve public understanding of and support for government policies and encourage citizen ownership of reform. Without the support of the public, governments often lack the capability to get things done.

- **Accountability:** Access to information and government transparency are in theory vital for enabling citizens to monitor and hold government to account for its actions. There is significant evidence that transparency can reduce opportunities for corruption.
- **Responsiveness:** An informed and politically active electorate in theory strengthens the demand for governments to be accountable. There are several examples where such processes (e.g. debate through the media, public information campaigns, social accountability mechanisms) have encouraged government responsiveness to citizens' demands and resulted in better public services.

The Communication Initiative, 2007, 'Communication and Governance', Ch. 3 in World Congress on Communication for Development: Lessons, Challenges, and the Way Forward, The Communication Initiative, Food and Agriculture Organization of The United Nations, and The World Bank

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3721>

How can communication enhance good governance, participation and transparency? Is a free media essential for development? This chapter reports on some of the findings of the World Congress on Communication for Development. It argues that free flows of information and communication lie at the heart of good governance, transparency and accountability. Communication for development has evolved beyond traditional propaganda and marketing to a greater emphasis on two-way communication flows, dialogue, and participation.

COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

The role of communication in governance can be broadly understood on two levels – communication *structures*, and communication *processes*:

- **Communication structures:** Communication structures include free, plural, and independent media systems, robust civil society, and the legal and regulatory framework that enables or precludes the free flow of information from government to citizens and vice versa. These form the framework through which citizens and government can communicate and engage in dialogue. They are essential components of the so-called 'democratic public sphere' (see below), and play an important role in forming public opinion (CommGAP, 2007).
- **Communication processes:** Communication processes can be one-way (e.g. providing information and conveying 'messages'), or two-way (e.g. dialogue, deliberation). Communication has evolved away from its traditional focus on one-way communication for the purpose of propaganda, social marketing, awareness-raising, and influencing attitudes, opinions and behaviour, towards a much greater emphasis on more participatory and deliberative processes of dialogue.

CommGAP, 2007, 'Communication for Good Governance', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3718>

How does communication support good governance? What can be learned from the experience of the World Bank's Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP)? This briefing paper argues that communication contributes to good governance primarily in the area of influence. Skilful communication can increase stakeholders' support for governance reform objectives, influencing opinion, attitude and behaviour change. Communication tools can also enhance citizen engagement in political systems. It is important to understand both communication processes and the framework for national dialogue in which these operate.

PUBLIC OPINION AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The public sphere is the space where citizens come together to freely engage in dialogue and debate on issues which matter to their lives, and through that debate aim to influence government policy and bring about social change. A democratic public sphere relies on an active civil society, engaged citizens and a free and independent media. It also requires constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties and the right to freedom of opinion and assembly. In non-pluralist contexts, the state often controls the public sphere and has a monopoly on traditional mass media. Web-based media technologies have become important channels of information, communication and articulation. They allow for participation in a new type of public sphere that is difficult for the state to control.

The public sphere is important in governance not only because it can facilitate civic action and public participation in decision-making, but critically because it is also the space where public opinion is formed and articulated. Public opinion can be defined as the majority view on a public issue after it has been discussed in the public arena. Some argue the importance of public opinion in determining social and political change that is favourable to the poor has generally been overlooked in development studies. In political science, public opinion is widely accepted to be an important basis of power and legitimacy – in other words, legitimate governments are those that listen and respond to public opinion.

Odugbemi, S., 2008, 'Public Opinion, the Public Sphere, and Quality of Governance: An Exploration', Chapter 2 in Governance Reform under Real World Conditions, CommGAP, World Bank

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3732>

What is the best framework for achieving capable, responsive and accountable government in developing countries? How can political communities be changed to ensure that public resources go toward securing the general welfare? This study argues that the power of public opinion is a critical factor. Further, a democratic public sphere provides a vital structure through which good governance may be secured.

Hoffmann, B., 2010, 'Civil Society 2.0? – How the Internet Changes State-Society Relations in Authoritarian Regimes: The Case of Cuba', GIGA Working Paper no. 156, German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Hamburg

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4066>

How has the spread of digital media across international boundaries affected the role of civil society under authoritarian regimes? Examining the case of Cuba, this paper compares civil society dynamics prior to the internet – in the early to mid-1990s – and a decade later. It finds that in the pre-internet period, civil society's focus was on behind-the-scenes struggles for associational autonomy within the state-socialist framework. A decade later, digital media has supported the emergence of a new type of

public sphere in which the civil society debate involves autonomous citizen action. However, its effects on political reform depend on the extent to which web-based voices connect with off-line debate and action.

Policy and technical briefs are also available:

CommGAP, 2008, 'The Public Sphere', Policy Brief, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank, Washington DC

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/PubSphereweb.pdf>

CommGAP, 2009, 'Changing Public Opinion', Technical Brief, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank, Washington DC

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/PublicOpinionweb.pdf>

See also the Social Science Research Council's Public Sphere Guide:

<http://publicsphere.ssrc.org/guide/>

THE COMMUNICATION FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

Providing citizens with information on priorities, programmes and activities is a vital government function which underpins state-society relations: Governments in the developed world are acutely aware of the need to communicate effectively both to influence public opinion and maintain their legitimacy, and often construct elaborate structures of press offices, and information ministries to perform the communication function. But in many developing countries, governments lack communication capacity, and the development of the communication function is hampered by a combination of weak incentives (e.g. no culture of disclosure), lack of professional training and communication infrastructure, and lack of supportive legal framework (e.g. access to information laws). Institutional culture often plays an important role in shaping a government's approach to communication, but changing institutional culture takes time.

CommGAP, 2009, 'The Contribution of Government Communication Capacity to Achieving Good Governance Outcomes', Conference Report, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3722>

How does government communication capacity contribute to good governance? What are the communication functions of government, and how can they be developed? This report from a one-day roundtable summarises discussions about the role of communication in government, cases of success and failure in government communication from around the world, and the promotion of this area of work in development. It highlights the importance of addressing incentives for government communication, the role of ethics, and the need to develop an appropriate enabling environment.

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

The importance of a free media in underpinning democratic development is often acknowledged, at least rhetorically, both in the academic governance literature and in the policy statements of development agencies. There is wide-ranging consensus around the idea that the evolution of a free and plural media is essential for holding government to account and enabling an informed citizenry. The media is often identified as a key institution which can either enable or block pro-poor reform. Nevertheless, communication advocates maintain that media is a relatively under-prioritised area of governance reform, and that development practitioners need to better understand and address the potentially catalytic role of the media – whether in the form of print, TV, radio, or internet – both in supporting or undermining democratic processes.

In principle, free, independent and plural media can provide a critical check on state abuse of power or corruption, enable informed and inclusive public debate on issues of concern to poor people, and give greater public recognition to the perspectives of marginalised citizens. Whether reporting positive or negative news, news media exposure can contribute to political trust and engagement, and satisfaction with democracy. Where the media performs the roles of agenda setter, watchdog and gatekeeper effectively, it can contribute to democratic governance and accountability in the following ways:

- **Agenda-setter:** The media can raise awareness of social problems, informing elected officials about public concerns and needs. A number of studies have demonstrated that the issues the media present as important are the same as those the public subsequently think are important.
- **Watchdog:** The news can provide a check on powerful sectors of society, including leaders within the private and public domains. Investigative journalism, in particular, can uncover corruption and monitor public interests. The role of the media as watchdog can be highly political in fragile conflict-affected states.
- **Gatekeeper:** The media can be a forum for the public debate and discussion of social issues and it can represent a plurality of perspectives, including those of poor and marginalized groups.

In practice, however, limited empirical research has been done on how and under what conditions the media might be able to perform these roles effectively. Whilst generalized assumptions about the media's positive contribution to democracy are often made in the literature, a number of structural barriers often prevent them from living up to this ideal in practice. These barriers include state ownership or control, a prevailing environment of patrimonialism, media commercialization, poor journalistic capacity and professional standards, and lack of citizen engagement with the media. Furthermore, many acknowledge that whilst the media may in principle be critical to public discourse, it cannot by itself guarantee improved state accountability or responsiveness.

DFID, 2008, 'Media and Good Governance: A DFID Practice Paper', Department for International Development, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3711>

Why and how is the media a critical sector in shaping governance relationships? This paper summarises the key global media trends that are leading to changes in country-level governance. It also explains some of the incentives and disincentives driving the sector which can lead the media to play either a positive or negative role in strengthening democratic politics. Donors should better understand how the media can enable or hinder citizen engagement, analyse the political implications of support to the media, and promote an enabling communication environment.

Deane, J., 2008, 'Why the Media Matters: the Relevance of the Media to Tackling Global Poverty', in Section 1 of ed. Harvey, M., 'Media Matters: Perspectives on Advancing Governance and Development', Global Forum for Media Development, Internews Europe.

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3720>

How can the media address global poverty? This paper argues that the media has a critical role in poverty reduction, particularly by fostering country ownership of development strategies and the accountability of governments to their citizens. However, the media operates in a politically and economically hostile environment with only fragmented, inconsistent and short-term support from donors. It therefore remains largely peripheral to development action. The media can and must enable people with the most to win or lose from development debates to access, understand and contribute to them.

Norris, P. and Odugbemi, S., 2010, 'Assessing the Extent to Which the News Media Act as Watchdogs, Agenda Setters and Gatekeepers', Chapter 15 in ed. Norris, P., 2010, 'Public Sentinel: News Media and Governance Reform', CommGAP, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3748>

This review finds that news media are important in furthering democratic governance, provided they are set up in a way that allows them to act as effective watchdogs, agenda setters and gatekeepers. Barriers to the fulfilment of these roles include restrictions on press freedom, market failures, lack of professional standards, weak civil society, and limitations in media literacy and public access to the media. Further research is required to fully determine the relationship between a free media and democratic governance.

Norris, P., 2008, 'The Role of the Free Press in Promoting Democratization, Good Governance and Human Development', in Section 2 of ed. Harvey, M., 'Media Matters: Perspectives on Advancing Governance and Development', Global Forum for Media Development, Internews Europe

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3719>

To what extent does free and independent media contribute to good governance and what are the consequences for human development? This chapter examines the results of a large-N cross-sectional comparison analysing the impact of press freedom on multiple indicators of democracy and good governance. The study seeks to test the hypothesis that where the media functions effectively as a watch-dog, a civic forum and an agenda-setter it helps to promote democracy, good governance and thus human development. Findings support claims that a free press is important, both intrinsically and instrumentally, as a major component of democracy and good governance.

Norris, P., 2011, 'Negative News', Ch. 9 in Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited, Cambridge University Press, New York

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4067>

Does a steady diet of negative news foster mistrust of government and political disenchantment? This paper examines the impact of the media on public perceptions and argues that although plausible, the evidence for theories of negative news is inconclusive. In fact, regular exposure to news can improve

engagement with democratic norms. Further, evidence from Britain and the USA shows that the impact of media coverage of political scandals is mixed. Considerable caution is needed in any claims regarding journalism's role in public dissatisfaction with government. There is no evidence supporting the 'video-malaise' theory that exposure to broadcast news damages people's democratic orientation. In fact, regular media exposure is positively related to democratic aspirations.

A technical brief is also available:

CommGAP, 2009, 'Media Effects' Technical Brief, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank, Washington DC

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/MediaEffectsweb.pdf>

EVIDENCE OF THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION ON GOVERNANCE

Advocates of communication acknowledge the need for more studies examining the impact (both positive and negative) of communication on democratic governance. To date, a handful of widely-cited empirical studies have found that open communication environments – particularly free media and access to information – are correlated with improved government responsiveness and accountability, lower levels of corruption, and economic development. It is widely acknowledged, however, that correlation does not prove causation, and caution is needed in drawing direct causal links between good communication *structures* and good governance. At the *process* level, there is some empirical and anecdotal evidence, largely contained in the political communication literature, of how communication can impact on people's opinions and behavior; for example increasing people's individual knowledge of or participation in political systems, or their support for good governance.

Coffey International Development, 2007, 'The Role of Communication in Governance: Detailed Analysis', Coffey International Development, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3757>

What does available evidence tell us about the role of communication initiatives in government capability, accountability, transparency and responsiveness? This paper analyses the positive and negative contributions of communication to governance. In theory, effective communication can help to promote good governance; however, a solid evidence base is lacking and a positive correlation should not be assumed. Existing studies suggest that it is not enough to create the means of communication; enabling factors must be in place so that voices can be heard and citizens can hold government to account.

Besley, T., and Burgess, R., 2002, 'The Political Economy of Government Responsiveness: Theory and Evidence from India', London School of Economics, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3704>

What makes government responsive to citizens' needs? This paper highlights the importance of information flows about policy actions. Having an informed and politically active electorate strengthens incentives for government responsiveness. Evidence from India shows that state governments are more responsive where newspaper circulation is higher and electoral accountability greater; there is a role for both democratic institutions and mass media in ensuring that citizens' preferences are reflected in policy.

Islam, R., 2006, 'Does More Transparency go Along with Better Governance?', *Economics and Politics*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 121-167

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3703>

How are information flows linked to governance? This paper presents a new indicator, the transparency index, to measure the frequency with which governments update economic data made available to the public. It also uses the existence of a Freedom of Information Act as an indicator of transparency. Cross-country analysis shows that countries with better information flows, as measured by these indices, have better quality governance.

Bandyopadhyay, S., 2009, 'Knowledge-Based Economic Development: Mass Media and the Weightless Economy', Discussion Paper no. 74, Distributional Analysis Research Programme, STICERD, London School of Economics and Political Science, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3741>

What is the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and mass media on economic growth and development? This paper analyses empirical data on mass media penetration, the spread of ICT and press freedom to assess their impact on corruption, inequality and poverty. The results provide strong evidence that higher mass media penetration (newspapers, radio and TV ownership) is associated with lower corruption. Further, lower poverty is robustly associated with higher newspaper circulation.

Freille, S., Emranul Haque, M., and Kneller, R., 2007, 'A Contribution to the Empirics of Press Freedom and Corruption', *European Journal of Political Economy* 23, pp. 838–862

<http://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/poleco/v23y2007i4p838-862.html>

What is the relationship between press freedom and levels of corruption? This article reviews the evidence to date of the relationship between aggregate press freedom and corruption, and performs its own analysis. It also tests the relationship among different forms of restrictions to press freedom using previously unexplored disaggregated data. Its findings support the prevailing view that restrictions to press freedom lead to higher corruption. Furthermore, both political and economic influences on the media are strongly and robustly related to corruption, while detrimental laws and regulations influencing the media are not. The paper concludes that the evidence indicates, although not conclusively, that the direction of causation runs from a freer press to lower corruption.

Delli Carpini, M., 2004, 'Mediating Democratic Engagement: The Impact of Communications on Citizens' Involvement in Political and Civic Life', in *Handbook of Political Communication Research*, ed. L. L. Kaid, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New York, pp. 395-434

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4039>

What evidence is there that communication influences democratic engagement? Is its influence positive or negative? This chapter reviews empirical research on the impact of the mass media on citizens' engagement in public life. Media use is positively correlated with many core elements of democratic engagement, such as citizens' political interest, knowledge, and participation. However, there is evidence that media use can also foster cynicism and disengagement. The magnitude of most effects demonstrated through empirical research in this area is small.

Wantchekon, L., 2009, 'Can Informed Public Deliberation Overcome Clientelism?', New York University, New York

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3762>

How can new democracies restrain electoral clientelism? This study draws on evidence from the 2006 presidential elections in Benin. It shows that if a campaign strategy is based on town hall meetings and policy proposals informed by empirical research, the electorate feel they have greater understanding of

policies and candidates. It also suggests that this approach could have positive effects on turnout and electoral support for the candidates involved.

Keefer, P. and Khemani, S., 2011, 'Mass Media and Public Services: The Effect of Radio Access on Public Education in Benin', Policy Research Working Paper, Human Development and Public Services Team, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4063>

Does radio access improve public service provision? And if so, does it do so by increasing government accountability to citizens, or by persuading households to take advantage of publicly-provided services? Using data from Benin, this paper finds that literacy rates among school children are higher in villages exposed to signals from a larger number of community radio stations. However, government inputs into village schools and household knowledge of government education policies are no different in villages with greater access to community radio than in other villages. Instead, households with greater access are more likely to make financial investments in the education of their children.

FURTHER RESOURCES

[Communication for Governance and Accountability \(CommGAP\)](#)

World Bank blog on [People, Spaces, Deliberation: Exploring the interactions among public opinion, governance and the public sphere](#)

[UNDP Office on Communications and Governance](#)

[United Nations Inter-agency Round Table on Communications for Development](#)

[Communication for Social Change](#)

[The Communication Initiative Network](#)

[DCERN: Impact of Communication in Development](#)

[International Institute for Communication and Development \(IICD\)](#)

[UNESCO: Communications and Information Sector](#)

[World Bank: Development Communication](#)

[FAO: Communication for Development](#)

[Mo Ibrahim Foundation](#)

[Search for Common Ground](#)

The Policy and Research Programme on the [Role of Media in Development](#) is a five year programme financed by the Department for International Development (DFID) at the BBC World Service Trust.

COMMUNICATION FOR GOVERNANCE REFORM

Contents

- The role of communication in governance reform processes
- Attitude, opinion and behaviour change
- Communication and political economy
- Building stakeholder support for reform
- Dialogue, deliberation and participatory communication
- Case studies: using strategic communication in governance reform

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN GOVERNANCE REFORM PROCESSES

Can the strategic use of communication increase the success and sustainability of governance reforms? What types of communication strategies are most effective in this regard? In principle, few would dispute the important role of communication in building consensus, cooperation and support among key stakeholders in the pursuit of reforms. In this sense, communication strategies may prove vital to addressing political barriers in the form of lack of political will among key government leaders, vested interests, lack of citizen demand for accountability, or hostile public opinion. In sum, skilful communication may be the key to translating reform objectives into achieving the desired results on the ground.

Odugbemi, S., and Jacobson, T., (eds.) 2008, 'Governance Reform Under Real World Conditions', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank, Washington DC
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3758>

What are the key challenges for governance reform in complex, diverse sociopolitical and economic conditions? How can these challenges best be addressed? This volume argues that successful, sustained reform requires the alignment of citizens, stakeholders, and voice. Reformers must overcome adaptive challenges such as public opinion, self-interested forces and inertia, and this requires skilled communication. Communication links the constitutive elements of the public sphere – engaged citizenries, vibrant civil societies, plural and independent media systems, and open government institutions – to facilitate the national dialogue which shapes informed public opinion.

ATTITUDE, OPINION AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Communication advocates argue that the main contribution communication can make to governance reform is to *influence* the opinion, attitude and ultimately the behaviour of key stakeholders (including leaders, bureaucrats, and citizens). This is important because all reform requires behaviour change on the part of key stakeholders.

CommGAP, 2009, 'Communication for Good Governance', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank, Washington DC
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3718>

How does communication support good governance? What can be learned from the experience of the World Bank's Communication for Governance and Accountability Program? This briefing paper argues that communication contributes to good governance primarily in the area of influence. Skilful communication can increase stakeholders' support for governance reform objectives, influencing opinion, attitude and behaviour change. Communication tools can also enhance citizen engagement in political systems. It is important to understand both communication processes and the framework for national dialogue in which these operate.

Strategic communication

Strategic communication – defined as the practice of systematically applying the processes, strategies, and principles of communication to bring about positive social change – has been particularly successful in supporting interventions in the health sector.

GTZ, 2006, 'Strategic Communication for Sustainable development: A Conceptual Overview', GTZ, Bonn

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3755>

What is meant by strategic communication for sustainable development? This publication outlines how strategic communication can be integrated into development policies and projects. Strategic communication ensures the active solicitation of stakeholders' perspectives. Despite its impact, communication is rarely integrated in development cooperation programmes as a strategic tool. However, cooperation and collaboration among stakeholders depend on it.

UNICEF, 2005, 'Strategic Communication for Attitude and Behaviour Change in South Asia', UNICEF, Kathmandu

http://www.unicef.org/cbsc/files/Strategic_Communication_for_Behaviour_and_Social_Change.pdf

How can strategic communication strategies be effectively planned and implemented? This paper presents a synthesis of the latest experiences in applying communication approaches used in the health sector in South Asia and elsewhere. The approaches studied include mass communication and entertainment education, interpersonal communication, participatory development communication, advocacy and social mobilisation. It concludes that communication programmes need to be responsive to peoples' wants, needs and desires. Careful communication research, analysis, planning, coordination, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation are necessary for stimulating social change.

Haider, H., 2010, 'Communication Initiatives to Change Attitudes and Behaviour', Helpdesk Research Report, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, University of Birmingham

<http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD752.pdf>

This report presents literature on communication interventions in developing countries designed to change attitudes and behaviours, particularly around gender relations. It looks at entertainment education, group education and various participatory approaches. Studies and evaluations of various communication initiatives addressing gender issues have found positive outcomes. Key lessons include: conducting formative research when conceptualising communication strategies; adopting mixed methods of communication; building on tradition and popular culture; and reaching out to community leaders.

A guide on building public support for anti-corruption efforts is available:

Byrne, E., Arnold, A. K. and Nagaon, F., 2010, Building Public Support for Anti-Corruption Efforts: Why Anti-Corruption Agencies Need to Communicate and How, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank, Washington DC

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/CorruptionWhitePaperpub31110screen.pdf>

This 'how-to guide' aims to help anti-corruption agencies understand how to control the way they present themselves to the public, how to frame their agencies' work, and how to develop allies in the press and the community at large.

COMMUNICATION AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

Development agencies increasingly acknowledge that the success of any reform is often dependent on political economy factors – specifically, the incentives, relationships, and distribution and contestation of power between different groups and individuals. CommGAP advocates the use of political communication strategies and techniques as a means of addressing the political economy of reform, arguing that they are a necessary adjunct to technocratic solutions which alone are insufficient to bring about sustainable change. Specifically, they suggest building political will before embarking on public engagement, taking public opinion seriously, adopting a clear and unifying message, and seeking to frame public debate strategically.

CommGAP, 2009, 'Political Economy Analysis to Action: Political Communication Approaches and Techniques', CommGAP, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3763>

Why are political communication approaches pivotal to efforts to reform governance systems? This study suggests that reform managers must be able to persuade society. Furthermore, although reform includes technical challenges, the challenges of adaptation require political communication.

Singh, A., 2008, 'Political Economy Reforms: Learning from the Delhi Water Experience', in Governance Reform Under Real World Conditions, eds. S. Odugbemi and T. Jacobson, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3764>

How do you introduce and sustain change in a society, like India, where there is a strong indigenous tradition and deep-rooted corruption? This research looks at efforts to reform the water sector in Delhi. It suggests that moving from policy rhetoric to its acceptance is always difficult. But instead of simply blaming the system for problems of implementation, it is important to analyse and work with the underlying reality.

Additional resources are available from the workshop, 'Political Economy of Reform: Moving from Analysis to Action', held by CommGAP and the World Bank Institute's Governance Practice in 2010: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEVCOMMENG/EXTGOVACC/0,,contentMDK:22663241~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:3252001,00.html>

BUILDING STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT FOR REFORM

Communication can arguably help to build coalitions of influential people, secure political will in the form of broad leadership support for change, and transform indifferent, or even hostile, public opinion into support for reform objectives. Practical strategies range from public interest lobbying, facilitating networks among like-minded political elites, building coalitions, and measuring and informing public opinion.

Designing communication strategies

Cabanero-Verzosa, C., and Garcia, H., 2009, 'Using Strategic Communication to Build Commitment to Reform', Chapter 1 in Building Commitment to Reform through Strategic Communication: The Five Key Decisions, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3706>

How can strategic communication help build commitment to reform? Strategic communication is a stakeholder- or client-centred approach to promoting changes in people's attitudes, knowledge and behaviour to achieve development objectives. This chapter outlines a five-step process for designing a communication strategy: (1) identify whose support is critical; (2) identify which behaviours, by which groups of people, will contribute to reform success; (3) use messages that start from the audience's perspective; (4) choose communication channels based on reach, frequency and credibility; (5) consider how changes will be tracked and evaluated.

Coalition building

CommGAP, 2008, 'Coalition Building', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3746>

How can communication strategies contribute to pro-reform coalition building? This briefing draws on experience from around the world, particularly from Kenya, the Philippines, Georgia and India. It argues that effective coalitions require careful use of communication to foster trust among members while also leveraging diversity – a delicate balancing act. Communication strategies should be sequenced according to each coalition's particular needs and stage of formation.

Influencing public opinion

Post, L. A., Salmon, T. and Raile, A., 2008, 'Using Public Will to Secure Political Will', ch. 7 in Governance Reform Under Real World Conditions, eds. S. Odugbemi and T. Jacobson, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3710>

How can political leaders mobilise public will to secure political will? This chapter examines communication strategies for securing political will. These involve defining the issue, focusing attention on the issue and affecting policy. Securing public and political will involves a complex interplay of factors; it is advisable to use a number of approaches simultaneously.

David, R, 2008, 'Transforming Adverse Public Opinion into Support for Reforms', ch. 16 in Governance Reform Under Real World Conditions, eds. S. Odugbemi and T. Jacobson, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3714>

How can governance reforms overcome indifferent or even hostile public opinion? This short chapter outlines six practical steps to help reformers successfully communicate reform messages. It argues that successful advocacy campaigns need a combination of research, reason, reach, resources, record and review.

A series of [technical briefs on communication tools and methods](#), particularly in the realm of political communication, is available on the CommGAP website.

DIALOGUE, DELIBERATION AND PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

It is often argued that dialogue, deliberation and public participation in decision-making increases public understanding and ownership of reform and therefore its long-term sustainability. Deliberation can also influence public opinion – a recent study showed that informed public deliberation can improve civic engagement and electoral support for good governance (Wantchekon, 2009).

Nevertheless, in order to impact on governance outcomes, public officials need to be willing to be influenced by public opinion. In practice, the line between sophisticated communication which seeks to ‘manufacture’ consent, and genuine consultation, which shows a willingness to engage people and possibly change plans based on their input, can often be blurred (Panos, 2007).

Singh, J.P., 2008, ‘Dialogues as Communication Strategy in Governance Reform’, ch. 4 in Governance Reform Under Real World Conditions, eds. S. Odugbemi and T. Jacobson, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3745>

What advantages can dialogue between society and its government offer over one-way communication? This chapter examines ‘dialogic communication’, or democratic deliberation, arguing that it offers citizens and public officials an opportunity to come together to find solutions to problems. Dialogic communication may be especially helpful for resource-constrained governments in designing public policy measures that find broad acceptance. Political analysis must guide development actors’ use of communication strategies.

Wantchekon, L., 2009, ‘Can Informed Public Deliberation Overcome Clientelism?’, New York University, New York

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3762>

How can new democracies restrain electoral clientelism? This study draws on evidence from the 2006 presidential elections in Benin. It shows that if a campaign strategy is based on town hall meetings and policy proposals informed by empirical research, the electorate feel they have greater understanding of policies and candidates. It also suggests that this approach could have positive effects on turnout and electoral support for the candidates involved.

Smith, G., 2005, ‘Power Beyond the Ballot: 57 Democratic Innovations from Around the World’, The Power Inquiry, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2008>

Which democratic mechanisms might increase and deepen popular participation in the political process? This paper assesses various “democratic innovations” according to their capacity for broadening citizen

engagement and deepening participation in agenda-setting and decision-making, as well as their adaptability and cost-effectiveness. It argues that creative approaches can improve democratic engagement, although political resistance and civic suspicion need to be countered through cultural change, well-resourced support and imaginative institutional design.

Fung, A., 2003, 'Recipes for Public Spheres: Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences', *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 338-367

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2619>

How can the quality of civic engagement and public deliberation be improved? This article examines 'minipublics' (deliberately convened publics). Educative forums and participatory advisory panels, for example, inform officials of citizens' interests, values and preferences, while problem-solving and participatory governance minipublics provide richer information about what is and is not working in operations, strategies and project design. Institutional design choices have implications for the character of participation, how officials and citizens are informed, the fostering of citizenship skills, connections between public deliberation and state action, and public mobilisation. Citizens are more likely to gain democratic skills and dispositions where deliberations have tangible consequences for them. Iterated interaction increases both incentives and opportunities for cooperation.

Toolkits and methodologies on dialogue, deliberation and participatory communication

Pruitt, B. and Thomas, P., 2007, 'Democratic Dialogue: A Handbook for Practitioners', General Secretariat of the Organization of American States , Washington DC; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Stockholm; United Nations Development Programme, New York

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3676>

What is dialogue and how can it respond to the need for wider participation in the public sphere? The first section of this handbook outlines the need for dialogue and how it can make a difference in pursuing peace, development and democratic governance. The number of dialogue processes taking place around the world has increased, as has the need for a greater understanding of effective dialogue.

Tufte, T. and Mefalopulos, P., 2009, 'Participatory Communication: A Practical Guide', World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3754>

How can participatory communication be applied in development projects? This publication outlines the four key phases of the participatory communication programme cycle. Genuine participatory communication is rare, but it can facilitate the empowerment of marginalised groups and have wider social and political effects. It requires continual dialogue with stakeholders. However, proper application of participatory communication methods are not enough to ensure a project's success. Broader contextual requirements are important, including a flexible project framework (especially regarding timelines), a politically conducive environment, and an enabling attitude among stakeholders.

Further information on [creating participatory spaces](#) is available in the GSDRC's voice and accountability topic guide.

CASE STUDIES: USING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN GOVERNANCE REFORM

Raman, V. and Bhanot, A. 2008, 'Political Crisis, Mediated Deliberation and Citizen Engagement: A Case Study of Bangladesh and Nirbachoni Sanglap', IAMCR, Mexico

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/pdf/wstrust/Bangladesh_Sanglap_Governance.pdf

Mozammel, M. and Odugbemi, S., 2005, 'With the Support of Multitudes: Using Strategic Communication to Fight Poverty through PRSPs,' UK Department for International Development/ World Bank

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1525>

Ramírez, R., and Quarry, W., 2004, 'Communication Strategies in an Age of Decentralization and Privatization of Rural Services', Overseas Development Institute, London

http://www.odi.org.uk/networks/agren/papers/agrenpaper_136.pdf

Bruni, M., 2008, 'Participation, Transparency, and Consensus Building in Support of Public Sector Reform: The Case of Nicaragua', in Governance Reform Under Real World Conditions, eds. S. Odugbemi and T. Jacobson, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEVCOMMENG/EXTGOVACC/0,,contentMDK:21707692~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:3252001,00.html>

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Contents

- Why media development matters
- Supporting independent news media
- Professionalising journalism
- Media literacy
- Lessons learned in media assistance
- Monitoring and evaluating media development
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WHY MEDIA DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

The media can be a powerful force for change in both developed and developing countries. In developing countries, it can have an important role in advancing a pro-poor development agenda, as well as supporting economic growth by stimulating consumer markets. Where it is able to effectively fulfill the roles of watchdog, gatekeeper and agenda-setter, it can improve governance by raising citizen awareness of social issues, enabling citizens to hold their governments to account, curbing corruption, and creating a civic forum for debate. It can also amplify the voice of marginalised and excluded groups. Recent research has shown that the media (particularly radio) is serving a growing population of young, rural, and non-literate demographic groups in Africa (BBC, 2006).

In most countries the media sector is diverse, usually consisting of a combination of the following:

- **Community media:** These are small-scale, non-profit enterprises (e.g. community-based radio stations) that aim to reflect and service the interests of their local community. Some argue that community media play a special role in giving a voice to rural and/or marginalised and poor communities and those without access to mainstream media, and often deliver content that is part of a development agenda. The financial sustainability of community media is often a major challenge.
- **State-owned media,** especially broadcasting services: these have the broadest reach but are often criticised for government-bias (or susceptibility to political pressure), a focus on urban issues, lack of professional journalism, and poor quality programming as a result of under-resourcing.
- **Private media:** Whilst private media are largely viewed as independent, they are driven by profit and usually reliant on revenues from advertising. They can also be influenced by business interests or government, for instance through government advertising or tax cuts. Moreover, a focus on financial returns can lead to the homogenisation of programmes and a bias towards entertainment rather than education content.

- **Public Service Broadcasting (PSB):** In contrast to both state-owned and commercial media, Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) operates within a clear legislative framework, and enjoys substantial autonomy over programming and content. Programming is driven by public interests and is often funded by public subscriptions and fees (sometimes supplemented by state funding and advertising).

Challenges for media development

In practice, media development often faces obstacles in the form of low professional journalistic standards, a lack of financial resources, weak technical skills, fragmented legal frameworks and an undemocratic political system. There is also a risk that in patronage societies, the media may not be able to break free from its political constraints and may operate according to clientelism or be captured by private interests ('media capture'). Under these circumstances, there are questions about how and whether donors can ensure that supporting the media will benefit the public interest. Specifically, can and should donors choose to support some types of media, and media organisations, over others?

Norris, P. and Odugbemi, S., 2010, 'Assessing the Extent to Which the News Media Act as Watchdogs, Agenda Setters and Gatekeepers', Chapter 15 in ed. P. Norris, Public Sentinel: News Media and Governance Reform, CommGAP, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3748>

This review finds that news media are important in furthering democratic governance, provided they are set up in a way that allows them to act as effective watchdogs, agenda setters and gatekeepers. Barriers to the fulfilment of these roles include restrictions on press freedom, market failures, lack of professional standards, weak civil society, and limitations in media literacy and public access to the media. Further research is required to fully determine the relationship between a free media and democratic governance.

Minnie, J., 2007, 'Ideological, Legal, Economic and Professional Obstacles to Media Development in Africa', in Section 3 of ed. Harvey, 2007, 'Media Matters: Perspectives on Advancing Governance and Development from the Global Forum for Media Development', Internews, Europe

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3727>

What are the obstacles to media development in Africa, and how might they be addressed? This chapter considers issues such as a lack of technical and financial resources, contradictory legal frameworks and disagreement about the role and professional standards of the media. Privately owned media is frequently perceived by governments as "the opposition" and not as an independent "fourth estate". Media development in Africa ultimately requires ideological change through citizen-led promotion of freedom of speech. Long-term measures such as public awareness campaigns and legal reforms are needed, making sustained support to the media sector crucial.

Besley, T and Prat, A. 2006, 'Handcuffs for the Grabbing Hand? Media Capture and Government Accountability', American Economic Review, vol. 96, no. 3, pp. 720-736

<http://www.aeaweb.org/articles.php?doi=10.1257/aer.96.3.720>

How does media capture influence government accountability? This paper argues that even in the absence of censorship, the government may influence news content by maintaining a 'cozy' relationship with the media. It concludes that media capture is endogenous to democratic politics, and several

features of the 'media market' determine the ability of the government to exercise such capture and hence to influence political outcomes.

The full text of a 2005 working paper version of this article is available at:

<http://econ.lse.ac.uk/~tbesley/papers/mediacap.pdf>

SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT NEWS MEDIA

Media development aims to create a media sector that is both independent and pluralistic. Activities include developing legislative frameworks, training and curriculum development for media, content development and audience research. Recent research has called for donors to adopt a more strategic and coherent approach to these activities across the media sector.

BBC World Service Trust, 2006, 'African Media Development Initiative: Research Summary Report', BBC World Service Trust, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3723>

How can donors, investors, media and media development organisations collaborate to strengthen Africa's media sector? This report outlines the findings of a survey of media in 17 sub-Saharan countries. The sector is growing and becoming increasingly diverse, but faces challenges such as state control and lack of investment. Donors underestimate the media's potential to contribute to development and governance. Support for media development in Africa must be strategic, holistic, collaborative and driven by local needs. Initiatives should be better coordinated and expanded in scale and duration.

Wood, A. and Barnes, J., 2007, 'Making Poverty the Story: Time to Involve the Media in Poverty Reduction', Panos Institute, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4057>

This report argues that all policy actors need to recognise and support the mass media's potentially crucial contribution to poverty reduction. In particular, high-quality public service and public interest journalism should be supported as public goods in their own right. It is crucial to promote media development in order to realise the media's scrutiny role. While specific initiatives to tackle problems and seize opportunities are valuable, a structural approach is called for, including support for comprehensive public policies on the media.

Puddephatt, A., 2010, 'Sida's Guidelines for Media Development', Stockholm Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Stockholm

Access online by searching Sida's publications database: <http://sidapublications.citat.se/english>

Supporting Public Service Broadcasting (PSB)

A key concern for donors is promoting Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) and creating the necessary legislative and regulatory environment to ensure media independence. PSB should be available and accessible to all with broad programming diversity, impartiality of reporting and protection from both political and commercial interests. PSB can contribute to good governance where it provides unbiased information to the public, gives voice to all and is obliged to promote alternative views which is critical

for democracy. It can also play a role in fostering a common national identity, promoting tolerance and facilitating discussion around governance-related issues, for example PRSPs and Peace Agreements.

UNDP, 2004, 'Supporting Public Service Broadcasting: Learning from Bosnia and Herzegovina's Experience', Democratic Governance Group, UNDP, New York

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3728>

How can the reform of broadcasting media help to promote democratic governance, conflict prevention and poverty reduction? What can be learned from the implementation of such reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina? This paper argues that public service broadcasting (PSB) can play a key role in promoting democratic governance and reducing poverty. However, broadcasting reform can only produce results at the same pace as democratic evolution in a given country, and should be integrated into broader democratic governance reform. Reformers need a strategic plan and a focus on the enabling legislative and regulatory framework.

Community media

Some argue that because of the particular role community media can play in advancing a pro-poor development agenda, raising awareness of social struggles, and reaching marginalised groups, donors should provide greater support for community media.

Milan, S., 2009, 'Four Steps to Community Media as a Development Tool', Development in Practice, Volume 19, Issue 4 & 5 June 2009, pp. 598 – 609

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/516628423-9104098/content~db=all~content=a913197361>

What is the link between community communication and human development? How can donors support community media? This article argues that community media represent a crucial input in development processes, playing an important role in democratisation, social struggles, and awareness raising. But they often face financial and legal difficulties due to the constraints created by national media laws. It concludes with suggestions for development advocates and communities regarding advocacy for a policy environment supportive of community media, drawing on case studies from the UK, where the communication regulator has opened a process to license community radios; and Brazil, where thousands of 'illegal' community stations are facing repression, but where the regulator has inaugurated a consultation process with practitioners.

Regulatory reform

Regulatory reform – for example, the creation of independent broadcasting regulatory bodies and the passing of freedom of information legislation – is often required to develop media independence. In many developing countries progress in this area is slow, with laws taking too long to be passed and, even where they have been passed, the government continuing to exert undue influence over the media sector.

Price, M., 2007, 'The Enabling Environment for Free and Independent Media', Section 3 in ed. Harvey, 2007, 'Media Matters: Perspectives on Advancing Governance and Development from the Global Forum for Media Development', Internews Europe

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3738>

What steps enable the development of free and independent media? This chapter examines the relationship between free and independent media and democratic institutions. Each step in political and

legal transitions contributes to an enabling environment for independent media, which in turn promotes achievement of broader political goals. It is not only laws themselves that must be addressed, but the institutional structures administering them.

Support to media around elections

The media can be an influential force around elections. Impartiality of the media during electoral campaigns and after elections is difficult to achieve, even in well-established democracies. Where election outcomes are contested, media can either exacerbate or resolve disputes, playing a significant role in determining the likelihood of post-election violence.

Semetko, H., 2010, 'Election Campaigns, Partisan Balance, and the News Media' ch. 7 in ed. P. Norris, Public Sentinel: News Media and Governance Reform, CommGAP, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3733>

What is the impact of partisan balance in the news media during elections in democracies and societies in transition? This chapter examines the impact of balance and bias in the news media on public opinions, political behaviour and, ultimately, election outcomes. Drawing on case studies of recent elections in Kenya, Russia, Mexico and Turkey, it argues that the media, particularly television, plays a key role in influencing election processes.

Stremlau, N., and Price, M., 2009, 'Media, Elections and Political Violence in Eastern Africa: Towards a Comparative Framework', Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy, Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford / Center for Global Communication Studies, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania / Stanhope Centre for Communications Policy Research, London

<http://pcmlp.socleg.ox.ac.uk/sites/pcmlp.socleg.ox.ac.uk/files/final%201%20ea%20workshop.pdf>

What is the role of the media in exacerbating or resolving post-election disputes? This report presents the findings of a workshop which explored why election violence occurred after some elections and not others, drawing on experiences in Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Somaliland, Tanzania and Sudan. The report suggests three ways of analysing the role of the media in post-election violence: 1) as an amplifier, facilitating and accelerating the spread of messages that both encourage violence or appeal for peaceful resolutions; 2) as a mirror, offering either an accurate or somewhat distorted reflection of the state- and nation-building process; and 3) as an enabler, contributing to the process of nation-building.

Lloyd, L., 2009, 'Media and Elections in the SADC Region: Protocols and Policies', fesmedia Africa Series, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Windhoek, Namibia

http://fesmedia.org/fileadmin/files-fesmedia.org/Lloyd_MediaAndElectionsInSADCRegion_2009.pdf

PROFESSIONALISING JOURNALISM

Research has shown that professional and ethical journalism standards tend to be poor in developing countries, and that this results in little credibility and trust in the media as a source of objective information. Although there are some cases of good-quality training institutions and professionalism in the sector, both are generally lacking. Low salaries and social status also create difficulties in retaining staff and preventing bribery-based journalism.

Wahl-Jorgensen, K. and Cole, B., 2008, 'Newspapers in Sierra Leone: A Case Study of Conditions for Print Journalism in a Post-conflict Society', *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* vol 29 no 1, pp1-20
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3734>

What are the challenges of democratic communication in developing countries? What can be learned from print journalism in Sierra Leone? This article analyses the conditions of the newspaper industry in Sierra Leone since the end of civil war. It highlights key difficulties including a lack of financial, technological and human resources. Resource constraints affect every level of society, however; the challenges facing the press must be viewed within the broader social context. Despite its difficulties, the press in Sierra Leone is emerging as an important watchdog.

Yusha'u, M., 2009, 'Investigative Journalism and Scandal Reporting in the Nigerian Press', *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 155-174
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3729>

To what extent is investigative journalism used to uncover allegations of corruption in Nigeria? What are its key challenges? This article uses interviews with journalists to explore the use of investigative journalism in Nigeria. While the press can help to strengthen government institutions, especially through its watchdog role, significant reform is needed to strengthen media organisations, to limit corruption and to restore public confidence in the press. Investigative journalism in Nigeria is limited by low salaries, bad working conditions, corrupt practices by journalists, and clientelism.

Panos, 2010, 'Reporting Tax Research: Connecting Researchers and Journalists for Improved Media Coverage and Debate in Kenya', Panos Institute, London
http://zunia.org/uploads/media/knowledge/Panos-London_Reporting-tax-case_study-web1291786294.pdf

The Kenyan media has played an important role in generating debate around government activities and the acquisition and spending of public money. It has yet, however, to sufficiently scrutinise and debate the relationship between public spending and taxation. Debating these issues is considered important for the country's democratic process. This case study describes the work of Relay, a media and research communication programme, in providing training for journalists and researchers on the issue of tax and governance; and in facilitating relationship-building between research, media and civil society actors.

Berger, G., 2008, 'Toward Defining "Potential Centres of Excellence" in African Journalism Training', *Journalism Practice*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 147-162
<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a792564511&db=all>

What are the particular needs of journalism education in developing countries? This paper describes a UNESCO programme which aimed to identify the journalism schools in Africa with the greatest potential to be "centres of excellence". It presents a set of criteria and indicators that constitute a home-grown

and relatively legitimated system of journalism training which could serve as a model within African countries and beyond.

UNESCO's report on this programme is available at:

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=24847&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

MEDIA LITERACY

Media literacy can be defined as citizens' ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create media content. Several authors argue that media literacy should be a central component of donor media assistance. They suggest that working directly with citizens to engage them in the media, helping citizens to understand the role of the media in democratic processes, and empowering them to become critical consumers of news media is essential if the media is to fulfill its potential role in improving democratic governance. Moreover, it is argued that developing media literacy is key to enabling *equitable* public access to information.

A variety of activities can support media literacy, including:

- Establishing media watchdog groups to raise citizens' awareness about how the media covers different issues
- Creating public spaces and forums where people can freely discuss current affairs and educate themselves
- Developing mechanisms for people to actively provide feedback on the media, e.g. News Ombudsmen
- Publishing and promoting media monitoring results to heighten citizen awareness of media practices and processes
- Civic education
- Media literacy education in schools.

Moeller, S., 2009, 'Media Literacy: Understanding the News', Center for International Media Assistance, National Endowment for Democracy, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3715>

What is the relevance of media literacy for the development sector? This study examines efforts to promote understanding of the media's role in a democracy and to equip citizens to analyse and participate in the news process. Without an independent media, citizens lack accurate information and so are less able to foster democracy and hold duty-bearers accountable. Media literacy training creates demand for accurate and fair news on both traditional and digital media platforms. This encourages checks and balances and democratic debate.

Martinsson, J., 2009, 'The Role of Media Literacy in the Governance Reform Agenda', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3739>

How does media literacy contribute to governance reform? This paper argues that media literacy helps citizens to become informed, to engage in the public sphere to effect change, and to demand good governance and accountability. In an increasingly complex media landscape, citizens need to be able to access, analyse, evaluate and develop media content. Donors should therefore promote media literacy as an integral part of the development process.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

The growth in media assistance programmes during the 1990s has led to an increased demand for robust media indicators and strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methodologies. Several sources discuss the difficulty of establishing clear media indicators and highlight the diversity of the ways in which different organisations monitor and evaluate media assistance programmes. There is a need to move away from output-based evaluations of media assistance (e.g. number of journalists trained) to measuring the actual impact of assistance programmes.

Mosher, A., 2009, 'Good, But How Good? Monitoring and Evaluation of Media Assistance Projects', Center for International Media Assistance, National Endowment for Democracy, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3725>

How are media assistance programmes being monitored and evaluated? How can such M&E be improved? This report finds that useful tools include: gathering baseline data; content analysis; balancing quantitative and qualitative data; and employing outside evaluators to conduct impact assessments. Donors should increase funding for the M&E of media assistance projects and should help to develop a shared but adaptable approach to M&E. Organisations could save money by exchanging non-competitive information (such as baseline data) and should ensure that time spent on project M&E is costed.

Tools for evaluating media development

Myers, M., Woods, N. and Odugbemi, S., 2005, 'Monitoring and Evaluating Information and Communication for Development (ICD) Programmes: Guidelines', Department for International Development (DFID), London

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications/icd-guidelines.pdf>

UNESCO, 2008, 'Media Development Indicators: A Framework for Assessing Media Development', the International Programme for the Development of Communication, UNESCO, Paris

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001631/163102e.pdf>

LESSONS LEARNED IN MEDIA ASSISTANCE

What can be learned from a decade of donor support to the media? Recent studies and evaluations emphasise the difficulty of building media capacity without creating dependency, especially given the financial instability of independent media and community media initiatives. Other lessons learned include the need to improve donor coordination, to take a long-term view and to find good local partners. Some studies stress the need to respect editorial independence, both from local political pressure, and from donor interests.

DFID, 2008, 'Media and Good Governance: A DFID Practice Paper', Department for International Development, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3711>

Why and how is the media a critical sector in shaping governance relationships? This paper summarises the key global media trends which are leading to changes in country-level governance. It also explains some of the incentives and disincentives driving the sector which can lead the media to play either a positive or negative role in strengthening democratic politics. Donors need to better understand how the media can enable or hinder citizen engagement, to analyse the political implications of support to the media, and to promote an enabling communication environment.

Kumar, K., 2004, 'USAID's Media Assistance: Policy and Programmatic Lessons', Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination, USAID, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3750>

What can be learned from USAID's media assistance programmes? This paper outlines the results of the agency's 2002-2003 assessment of such programmes. The assessment included workshops and a literature review plus fieldwork in Bosnia, Serbia, Central America and Russia. Key success factors were identified as: (1) a long-term perspective; (2) major resource commitments that facilitated comprehensive, multifaceted, mutually reinforcing interventions; and (3) a context of political transformation that encouraged acceptance of media assistance among political leaders and civil society. Different media development strategies are needed in different types of political system.

CIMA, 2008, 'Empowering Independent Media: U.S. Efforts to Foster Free and Independent News Around the World', Center for International Media Assistance, National Endowment for Democracy, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3724>

What can be learned from US media assistance? This report examines eight key areas: funding, professional development, higher education, the legal environment, sustainability, media literacy, new media, and monitoring and evaluation. The report asserts that a free media can impact critical areas in society – including education, government accountability, health, and the empowerment of women and minorities. However, it is important to address obstacles such as insufficient funding, unstable legal environments, lack of donor coordination, and problems in sustainability and evaluation.

Rhodes, A., 2007, 'Ten Years of Media Support to the Balkans: An Assessment', Media Task Force of the Stability Pact for South East Europe and Press Now, Amsterdam

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3744>

What has been the impact of ten years of the international community's support to media in the Western Balkans? This report analyses 37 evaluations of media support projects, and makes

recommendations for the future. In spite of mixed results, the impact of media assistance has been substantial. Donors should consider the development of the wider media market instead of sustaining too many individual media outlets. Projects should help NGOs to work with lawyers in order to understand and use new laws once reforms have been passed.

GENDER AND MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Research has shown that women are dramatically underrepresented as news subjects or news deliverers in the media. A key area of media development should therefore be to provide gender training to journalists to reduce the invisibility of women in the media.

Gallagher, M., 2005, 'Who Makes the News? Global Media Monitoring Project 2005', WACC, London
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3705>

What messages do news media convey about who and what is important? This report analyses the results of extensive research into gender representation in news media – the third Global Media Monitoring Project (2005). It matters profoundly who and what is selected (or not selected) to appear in news coverage, and how individuals and events are portrayed. Most news is at best gender blind, at worst gender biased. Media monitoring facilitates advocacy, and skills in media analysis are important for informed citizenship.

FURTHER RESOURCES

[BBC World Service Trust](#)

[ORECOMM- Consortium for Media and Glocal change](#)

[UNESCO Portal on Media Development](#)

[Media Development Researchers Conference](#) (2010)

[Media Map Project](#)

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – AND ITS CONSTRAINTS

Contents

- Access to information – and its constraints
- Does transparency matter for good governance?
- Supporting open information environments
- Information and social accountability
- ICTs, e-governance and democracy

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – AND ITS CONSTRAINTS

Access to information is critical for enabling citizens to exercise their voice, to effectively monitor and hold government to account, and to enter into informed dialogue about decisions which affect their lives. It is seen as vital for empowering all citizens, including vulnerable and excluded people, to claim their broader rights and entitlements. But the potential contribution to good governance of access to information lies in both the willingness of government to be transparent, as well as the ability of citizens to demand and use information – both of which may be constrained in low capacity settings. A key question in this regard is: To what extent can access to information, and government transparency, advance the claims of poor and marginalised groups and make governments accountable?

Many commentators caution that access to information does not necessarily lead to greater citizen participation, state accountability and state responsiveness. In many developing countries, there are real structural and political barriers which hinder both the capacity and incentives of governments to produce information, and the ability of citizens to claim their right to information and to use it to demand better governance and public services. These barriers include:

- **Government may not be actively supportive** of the right to information, particularly in contexts where there is a legacy of undemocratic political systems or closed government.
- **Citizens may not be aware** of their legal right to information, or, in some cases may be reluctant to assert it, either because of fear of a repressive regime, or a prevailing culture of not questioning authority. In other cases, there are structural barriers to poor people accessing and using information. For example, access to the Internet remains low in many developing countries, particularly in remote areas.
- **The capacity of public bodies to provide information may be weak**, and officials may be unaware of their obligations. In low capacity environments, record management and statistics generation may be insufficient to support access to information.

Daruwala, M. and Nayak, V. (eds), 2007, 'Our Rights, Our Information: Empowering People to Demand Rights through Knowledge', Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, New Delhi

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3078>

Why is the right to information important? How can it be used, and how can it be effectively implemented by governments? This report provides case studies to show that information empowers people to demand adherence to the whole range of their human rights. By establishing the right to information in domestic law and by setting up public information systems, governments can enhance citizens' participation in governance, advance equitable economic development, reduce poverty and fight corruption.

Darbshire, H., 2010, 'Proactive Transparency: The Future of the Right to Information? A Review of Standards, Challenges, and Opportunities', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank, Washington DC

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/DarbshireProactiveTransparency.pdf>

DOES TRANSPARENCY MATTER FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE?

What kinds of transparency lead to what kinds of accountability, and under what conditions? What is the relationship between transparency and levels of corruption? The conventional wisdom is that transparency generates accountability, and several studies – both at the macro and micro level, and including econometric studies – have found a correlation between political and economic transparency and improved socio-economic indicators. But some argue the actual evidence on transparency's impacts on accountability is not as strong as one might expect. Whether or not transparency can actually change political behaviour in the longer term is dependent on political will and the active involvement of civil society. Some conclude that transparency is therefore a necessary but insufficient factor in social accountability.

Bellver, A., and Kaufmann, D., 2005, 'Transparency: Initial Empirics and Policy Applications', World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3753>

Can access to information and transparency reforms improve governance and development outcomes? How can transparency reforms be empirically measured and effectively implemented? This paper reviews existing literature and develops and applies a new transparency index for 194 countries. While causality remains difficult to determine, transparency is associated with better socio-economic and human development indicators, and with higher competitiveness and lower corruption. Where there is political will for transparency reform, much progress can be made without excessive resource requirements.

Fox, J., 2007, 'The Uncertain Relationship between Transparency and Accountability', Development in Practice, vol. 17, nos. 4 & 5, pp. 663-671

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3707>

What kinds of transparency lead to what kinds of accountability, and under what conditions? This article suggests that transparency can be 'opaque' (the dissemination of information that does not reveal how institutions actually behave) or 'clear' (access to reliable information about institutional behaviour). Accountability can be 'soft' ('answerability' – demanding answers from duty-bearers) or 'hard' (answers

plus consequences). Information dissemination does not automatically lead to answerability, nor answerability to the possibility of sanctions. If access to information is to guarantee the sanctions that hard accountability requires, public sector as well as civil society actors must intervene.

Reinikka, R and Svensson, J, 2004, 'The Power of Information: Evidence from a Newspaper Campaign to Reduce Capture', World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3239, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=936>

How can governments in low-income countries reduce capture of public funds? This paper demonstrates the success of a Ugandan newspaper campaign that has enabled schools and parents to monitor a large-scale grant programme. The study uses regression analysis to estimate the effects of increased public access to information and finds a strong relationship between proximity to a news outlet and lower capture. It suggests that empowering users of public services through access to information can be an effective strategy to combat local corruption and the capture of funds.

Capuno, J. J. and Garcia, M. M., 2010, 'Can Information about Local Government Performance Induce Civic Participation? Evidence from the Philippines', Journal of Development Studies, vol. 46, no. 4, pp. 624-643

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a921902824~frm=abslink>

This study on the Philippines finds that information about local government performance, in the context of decentralisation, can encourage civic participation. Heightened civic participation in turn can result in better service delivery and welfare by holding local leaders accountable for their performance. The study thus provides support for policies aiming to promote greater transparency in governance so as to deepen citizenship and accountability, and ultimately to improve economic development.

The full text of this article can also be accessed via document delivery from the British Library for Development Studies: <http://blids.ids.ac.uk/cf/opac/detailed.cfm?RN=308093>

Hubbard, P., 2007, 'Putting the Power of Transparency in Context: Information's Role in Reducing Corruption in Uganda's Education Sector', Working Paper No 136, Center for Global Development, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3742>

An often-told story in development circles is how corruption was slashed in Uganda simply by publishing the amounts of monthly grants to schools. This paper from the Center for Global Development examines the case in the context of Uganda's changing education policy from 1991-2002. While information did play a critical role in achieving a percentage drop (not necessarily an actual drop) in diverted funds, its impact has been overstated. Many contextual factors were also important, and similar results cannot necessarily be expected elsewhere.

SUPPORTING OPEN INFORMATION ENVIRONMENTS

Donor support to access to information typically includes measures to increase citizens' awareness of their right to information and support to legal and regulatory reforms to improve access to information. Many studies conclude that the impact of donor interventions to improve access to information should be measured not only by technical changes in the legal regime and government legislation, but also by the use of information by both civil society and marginalised groups.

UNDP, 2003, 'Access to Information', Practice Note, United Nations Development Programme, Oslo Governance Centre, Oslo

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1933>

How does access to information support good governance and poverty reduction? What needs to be included in the effective design of access to information programmes? This paper argues that access to information is an empowerment tool that underpins democratic governance, and that is also fundamental to other programme areas such as HIV/AIDS, the environment, gender, crisis prevention and ICT for development. To reduce poverty, it is essential to maximise poor people's access to information to enable their participation in democratic and policy making processes. Addressing the information and communication needs of the poor is also essential – the poor often lack information that is vital to their lives – such as information on basic rights and entitlements, information on public services, health, education, and employment.

Puddephatt, A., McCall, E. and Wilde, A., 2006, 'A Guide to Measuring the Impact of Right to Information Programmes', United Nations Development Programme, Oslo

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2029>

How can democratic governance programming promote and protect the right to information? What are the appropriate indicators to assess right to information interventions? This Guide focuses on the monitoring and evaluation of programmes, with an emphasis on gender and pro-poor indicators. It outlines four broad areas of the right to information that must be considered for a thorough evaluation; the legal regime, government legislation, and the use of information by both the general public and by marginalised groups.

Developing access to information legislation

Access to information (or Freedom of Information (FOI)) legislation is seen as an essential part of the enabling environment for citizen access to information. In theory, a legal right to information can increase government openness and responsiveness to requests for information. But developing countries often do not have adequate legal provisions for the right to information. Fewer than 7.5 percent of African countries have an enforceable right to information law (Darch, 2009). Experts suggest the main obstacles include a failure of political leadership, a culture of secrecy, low public awareness, and institutional barriers (Carter Centre, 2010).

Crucially, the passage of an access to information law may be a necessary but insufficient step towards meaningful access to information: governments and citizens must be adequately able and willing to implement, enforce and use the laws. Implementation and enforcement of the law are the most critical and challenging stages of reform (Neuman, 2009). The involvement of civil society in the formulation and adoption of access to information laws may increase their long-term use and sustainability. As yet, few studies exist of the impact of access to information laws at the grassroots level – specifically, of whether and how civil society is actually able to make use of them.

Darch, C., and Underwood, P. G., 2009, 'Struggles for Freedom of Information in Africa', in Freedom of Information and the Developing World: The Citizen, the State and Models of Openness, C. Darch and P. G. Underwood, University of Cape Town, South Africa

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3736>

How far have rights to information progressed in Africa? The conditions that make information access rights both important and hard to implement are seen in their most extreme forms in Africa. This chapter presents case studies from Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa. The advance of information rights in Africa has been limited. However, low-key activity indicates that some awareness exists. Further, if any resistance to the state is arguably a struggle over information, then it is important to listen for 'stifled voices of protest'.

Neuman, L., and Calland, R., 2007, 'Making the Access to Information Law Work', in *The Right to Know*, ed. A. Florini, Columbia University Press

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3740>

How can Access to Information (ATI) laws be successfully implemented? After a decade of proliferation of these laws, it is clear that the stimulus of both a supply of information and a demand is the key to meeting policy objectives. This chapter focuses on the government side of implementation – the 'supply side' – using examples from Latin America, the Caribbean and South Africa. Although there are technical aspects to effective implementation, adjusting mindsets is a more important and challenging priority.

Neuman, L., 2009, 'Enforcement Models: Content and Context', *Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP)*, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3752>

Access to information (ATI) rights are only meaningful if they are both enforceable and enforced. What are the different enforcement models for ATI laws, and what determines success? This paper draws on case studies to consider the three main ATI enforcement models: (1) judicial proceedings; (2) an information commission(er) or appeals tribunal with the power to issue binding orders; and (3) an information commissioner or ombudsman with the power to make recommendations. While there is no 'one size fits all' system, principles of independence, accessibility, affordability, timeliness and specialisation are paramount.

Puddephatt, A., 2009, 'Exploring the Role of Civil Society in the Formulation and Adoption of Access to Information Laws: The Cases of Bulgaria, India, Mexico, South Africa and the United Kingdom', *Communication for Governance and Accountability Program*, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3978>

How does civil society contribute to the passing of access to information (ATI) laws? This paper examines this process in Bulgaria, India, Mexico, South Africa and the UK. Civil society has impacted on measures to promote access to information through: advocating for ATI legal reform; building popular support; drafting and shaping legislation; helping citizens to understand ATI; and monitoring implementation. The country studies reveal contrasting experiences. It is crucial that civil society groups understand the process of change in their context. They must also avoid overselling what ATI can achieve. Demonstrating the practical value of ATI may be civil society's most important function.

Hernández-Valdez, A., 2009, 'Budgeting Implications for ATI Legislation: The Mexican Case', *Access to Information Working Paper series*, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/budgetingimplicationsforATILegislation.pdf>

Understanding political incentives

Political resistance is widely cited as a reason for the failure of interventions to support increased access to information in developing countries. Some argue that more focus on political analysis is needed so as to understand the incentives and interests of government, legislature, the media, business and civil society regarding access to information.

Cruz, A., 2009, 'Building Political Will for Enhanced Access to Information: Lessons from Latin America', ch. 13 in From Political Wont to Political Will: Building Support for Participatory Governance, ed. C. Malena, Civicus

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3751>

How can citizens' groups and other stakeholders build political will for the approval and enactment of right to information laws? By analysing experience in Honduras, Nicaragua, Chile and Uruguay, this chapter explores how political will was built to pass access to information laws. It also looks at the challenges of implementation, arguing that the adoption of legislation is merely an important first step. It will mean little if government, encouraged by informed citizens, does not implement the laws.

INFORMATION AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

What is the role of access to information in generating citizen demand for accountability? There is wide-ranging consensus that without access to information on the performance of governments, it is very difficult to mobilise citizens to hold government to account. And in the absence of citizen demand for accountability, there is little incentive for governments to actually be accountable. Some experts argue, therefore, that access to and use of information is a precondition to any form of social accountability (defined as accountability that relies on civic engagement) (World Bank, 2010).

There are multiple examples of the use of participatory budgeting, public hearings, social audits, and public information campaigns – all of which rely on citizen access to information – to mobilise citizens to demand better governance and public services. However, available evidence suggests that not enough is known about why some mechanisms work in some contexts and not others. Results are also mixed in terms of whether these mechanisms can actually increase citizen participation, encourage governments to be responsive to public demands, and ultimately result in improved service outcomes.

World Bank, 2007, 'Generating Genuine Demand with Social Accountability Mechanisms', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3761>

What factors contribute to the success or failure of Social Accountability (SA) initiatives? This paper reports on a 2007 workshop organised by the World Bank's Communication for Governance and Accountability Program. It examines what works in: (1) analysing the public sphere and political context; (2) gaining official support for the use of SA tools; (3) informing citizens; (4) mobilising citizen activism; and (5) achieving behaviour change in public officials through public opinion.

Pande, S., 2008, 'The Right to Information and Societal Accountability: The Case of the Delhi PDS Campaign', IDS Bulletin, vol. 38, no. 6, pp. 47-55

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3735>

To what extent can tools like the Right to Information (RTI) help ensure transparency and accountability? This article draws on the example of Parivartan, a Delhi-based citizens' group working on issues of corruption and accountability. This group has used the RTI to mobilise poor people and has used information to generate awareness through the media, holding government to account. The combination of a dedicated grassroots activist organisation and a RTI Act was necessary for achieving successful accountability.

Khemani, S., 2007, 'Can Information Campaigns Overcome Political Obstacles to Serving the Poor?', Chapter 5 in The Politics of Service Delivery in Democracies - Better Access for the Poor, eds. S. Devarajan and I. Widlund, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, Stockholm

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3708>

What type of information campaigns can change political incentives to serve the poor? This chapter reviews the literature on information campaigns and the role of mass media in influencing public policy. There is a role for information campaigns to shift political platforms away from inefficiently targeted programmes towards broader public policies that promote development.

Pandey, P., Goyal, S. and Sundararaman, V., 2009 'Community Participation in Public Schools: Impact of Information Campaigns in three Indian states', Education Economics, vol. 17, no. 3, pp 355–375

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3749>

What impact can community-based information campaigns have on school performance? This article finds that providing information through a structured campaign has a positive impact on school outcomes. A cluster randomised control trial of 610 villages across three Indian states provided public meetings about community roles and responsibilities in school management. A survey between two and four months later identified positive impacts on process variables such as community participation, provision of student entitlements and teacher effort. Impacts on learning were modest, however, and there were differences between states. Impacts need to be measured over a longer time period.

For further information on social accountability mechanisms, see the [user involvement and accountability](#) section of the GSDRC's service delivery topic guide.

ICT'S, E-GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY

Can new media – specifically, Internet, email, and mobile phones – enhance access to information in developing countries and allow for greater democratic participation and expression? Are the capacity constraints – for example, poor access to the Internet – too great?

Many donors argue ICTs can positively impact on government transparency, responsiveness, and accountability and empower citizens by increasing flows of information between government and citizens. Others caution that ICTs are not a panacea – they rely on the political will of organisations to be transparent. Furthermore, ICTs can only bring about improvements in government-citizen communication if citizens have the capacity to access and use them, and citizens in developing countries still have limited access to ICTs, particularly in remote areas. But new research is demonstrating how new social media (e.g. mobile phones) can function as an alternative medium for citizen communication or participatory journalism.

Sida, 2009, 'ICTs for Democracy: Information and Communication Technologies for the Enhancement of Democracy – with a Focus on Empowerment', Swedish International Development Agency, Stockholm

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3737>

What is the potential of Information and Communication Technology to support processes of democratisation and empowerment in developing countries? This report outlines the theoretical background to discussions on ICTs and democracy, and presents case studies from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. It argues for raising awareness and understanding of ICTs, and for making ICTs central to development cooperation and support for democratisation in the case study countries.

Sey, A., and Fellows, M., 2009, 'Literature Review on the Impact of Public Access to Information and Communication Technologies', CIS Working Paper No. 6, University of Washington Center for Information & Society, Seattle

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3726>

What evidence exists on the impacts of shared public access to Information and Communication Technologies? Governments, NGOs and entrepreneurs in developing countries have invested significantly in shared modes of access to ICTs (such as public libraries, telecentres and internet cafés), but to what effect? This review identifies and assesses empirical evidence on: (1) venue performance and sustainability; (2) users; (3) usage patterns; and (4) downstream impacts. Most of the literature evaluates process rather than impact. Solid evidence of impact remains elusive, and the evidence that does exist is mixed.

Banda, F., Mudhai, O., and Tettey, W., 2009, 'New Media and Democracy in Africa: A Critical Interjection', Introduction in African Media and the Digital Public Sphere, eds. O Mudhai, W Tetty and F Banda, Palgrave Macmillan, New York

http://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/reader/0230614868/ref=sib_rdr_ex?ie=UTF8&p=S00I&j=0#reader-page

Has new media technology brought social progress to Africa? This study looks at the impact of new information and communication technologies on the societies and politics of African countries. It argues that, a decade after the introduction of ICTs, the old questions about access, inequality, power and the quality of information available are still valid. The value of new media lies in the extent to which it meshes with old media to provide multimedia platforms that allow for greater democratic participation, inclusion and expression.

Livingston, S. L., 2011, 'Africa's Evolving Infosystems: A Pathway to Stability and Development', Research Paper, no. 2, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Boulder, Colorado

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4068>

How are new information and communication technologies contributing to democratic development in Africa? How can the international community support these? This paper argues that political instability and violence in Africa are often the products of rumour and misinformation. It highlights how new information technology is improving information-sharing, education, and accountability. Policy initiatives should focus on encouraging the further development of reliable and innovative communication institutions. These are indispensable paths to greater security, democratic stability, and development.

Mäkinen, M., and Wangu Kuira, M., 2008, 'Social Media and Post-election Crisis in Kenya', The International Journal of Press/Politics, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 328-335

<http://hij.sagepub.com/content/13/3/328.abstract>

What was the role of the media during the two months of post-election crisis in 2008 in Kenya? This article discusses how people exchanged information during and after the media ban and analyses online discussions and media coverage. Particular emphasis is given to the role of social media, such as Web 2.0 communication tools and services, which enable citizens to interact or share content online. The paper shows that during the crisis, social media functioned as an alternative mechanism for citizen communication or participatory journalism. It argues this experience has important implications for the process of democratisation in Kenya.

E-governance

E-Governance is government use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizen participation in the decision-making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective (UNESCO, 2010). Recent research has shown that whilst ICTs are capable of reinforcing participation and democracy at the local level, they can under some circumstances be controlled by, and enhance the power of, local elites.

Misuraca, G. C., 2007, 'E-Governance in Africa: From Theory to Practice - A Handbook on ICTs for Local Governance', Sections 3 and 4, Africa World Press, New Jersey / International Development Research Centre, Ottawa

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=2919>

What are the implications for policy and practice of the integration of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) in local governance systems in Africa? What are the key drivers for effective integration of ICTs? Using cases from Senegal, Ghana, Uganda and South Africa this book analyses these issues. There is potential for growth by integrating ICTs into local governance, but building capacity is a key aspect of that potential.

Heeks, R., 2003, 'Causes of E-Government Success and Failure: Design-Reality Gap Model', Institute for Development Policy Management (IDPM), University of Manchester

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=526>

Why do e-Government projects succeed or fail? The eGovernment for the Development Information Exchange project suggests that a key factor is the level of difference between the current reality and the model/conception and assumptions built into the project's design. The larger this design-reality gap, the greater the risk of failure; conversely, the smaller the gap, the greater the chance of success.

Jager, A., and Reijnders, V., 2006, 'E-Governance in the Developing World in Action: The Case of DistrictNet in Uganda', IICD: The Hague

<http://www.iicd.org/files/DistrictNet-final.pdf>

FURTHER RESOURCES

[The Carter Centre](#)

[Article 19: Global Campaign for Free Expression](#)

[Open Democracy Advice Centre \(ODAC\)](#)

[African Women's Development and Communication Network \(FEMNET\)](#)

[UNPAN Knowledge Base for innovative e-government practices](#)

2008 conference on [Innovations in Accountability and Transparency through Citizen Engagement: The Role of Donors in Supporting and Sustaining Change](#)

2010 conference on [Information Communication Technology and Development](#)

2010 conference on the [Right to Public Information](#)

UNDP [Bibliography of Access to Information Resources](#)

COMMUNICATION IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES

Contents

- The role of communication in state-building
- The role of media in fragile and conflict-affected states
- Media development in fragile and conflict-affected states
- Case studies: communication in fragile and conflict affected states

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN STATE-BUILDING

How can communication structures and processes support state-building in fragile and conflict-affected states? Can they help to rebuild state-society relations and contribute to state legitimacy? Much of the recent state-building literature stresses that the international community should pay more attention to the development of positive state-society relations in state-building processes. At the same time, communication specialists and political scientists are beginning to argue that restoring the public sphere, which is often non-existent or exclusionary in fragile and conflict situations, can make a critical contribution in this regard.

Fragile and conflict-affected states are often characterised by a legacy of little or no interaction between government and society, a lack of trust in government, lack of citizen demand for accountability, and unrealistic expectations on the part of the population of what the government can achieve. In such contexts, communication can potentially play a crucial role in managing expectations, building trust in and oversight of state institutions, aiding the formation of an inclusive national identity and fostering an engaged and participatory citizenry.

von Kaltenborn-Stachau, H., 2008, 'The Missing Link: Fostering Positive Citizen-State Relations in Post-Conflict Environments', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3351>

How can the international community help to rebuild state-society relations in post-conflict situations? This study argues that current donor approaches to statebuilding are too narrowly focused and too fragmented to fully address the 'invisible' yet critical processes of state-society relations. It recommends the adoption of a governance framework based on the concept of the public sphere in order to foster positive collaboration and engagement within post-conflict societies.

A Policy Brief is also available at:

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

Fortune, F., and Bloh, O., 2008, 'Strategic Communication: The Heart of Post-Conflict Processes', Conflict Trends, 2008/2, African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, South Africa
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3756>

Why have governments and their international partners not placed strategic communication at the centre of post-conflict reconstruction and reform? This article outlines how strategic communication can help shift attitudes and behaviours of policymakers and citizens towards development and governance. Often, lack of political will and fear of accountability hinder the use of strategic communication in post-

conflict situations. However, such contexts provide unique opportunities for integrating strategic communication into reform processes.

For further information, see [strengthening citizen engagement](#) in the state-building section of the GSDRC's Fragile States topic guide.

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES

The role of the media in fragile and conflict-affected states is often seen as highly controversial and, some argue, poorly understood by policymakers. Whilst communication advocates tend to argue that the media can invigorate democracy in fragile and conflict-affected states, specifically by increasing government accountability, exposing corruption and facilitating informed public debate, many others caution that there is equal evidence of how the media can reinforce already deep societal divides.

Many questions remain regarding the relationship between media development and state-building. It is unclear, for example, under what circumstances media disrupts or reinforces neopatrimonial political systems, or whether and how media development should be sequenced with democratic reform. The media's political role in fragile and conflict-affected states is often most acute around elections, and these effects can include violence and the derailing of democratic processes (as in the case of Kenya, 2008). What is clear is there is a need for a much better understanding, and more empirical research, on the conditions under which the media either contribute to or, alternatively, undermine state stability.

IDS and BBC World Service Trust, 2009, 'The Role of Media in Fragile Situations: A Research Dialogue Across Disciplines', Report from a research symposium held at Stanmer House, Brighton, UK, 16 January 2009

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3712>

What is the relationship between the media and democracy in fragile states? How do the media shape state-citizen relationships in fragile states? This report presents the findings of a research symposium. The symposium brought together academics and practitioners across disciplines to discuss the role of the media in fragile and conflict-affected states and to identify critical research gaps. It concluded that media and communication research could provide important policy insights into state fragility, state effectiveness and state-citizen relationships.

Further information from the 2009 conference on effective states and the media, jointly organized by IDS and the BBC World Service Trust, is available at:

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/news/effective-states-and-the-media-a-research-dialogue-across-disciplines>

Kalathil, S. Langlois, J., and Kaplan, A., 2008, 'Towards a New Model: Media and Communication in Post-Conflict and Fragile States', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3713>

How can donors improve their support to communication in conflict-affected and fragile environments? This report draws lessons from the experience of donors, in particular USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, in supporting media and communication in conflict-affected environments. It calls for donors to make media and communication a technical priority in post-conflict and fragile states, and

to view media and communication as a public good in itself, rather than as an instrument towards another end.

A policy brief is also available at:

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGOVACC/Resources/CommGAPBriefs_Post-Conflict_web0908.pdf

Mezger, M. and Sial, S., 2010, 'Media and Governance in Pakistan: A Controversial Yet Essential Relationship', Initiative for Peacebuilding

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4061>

What is the position of the media within Pakistan's governance system? What is the media's potential as an agent of reform? This study examines the main news media outlets, finding them to be characterised by over-accelerated growth and corrupt and sensationalist journalism. While there has been a (temporary?) halt to restrictive government measures against the press, patronage is an ongoing challenge. Improved education is key to the development of a professional Pakistani media and of well-informed public opinion. More attention also needs to be paid to the wide-reaching but particularly sensationalist Urdu-language media.

Stremmler, N., and Price, M., 2009, 'Media, Elections and Political Violence in Eastern Africa: Towards a Comparative Framework', An Annenberg-Oxford Occasional Paper in Communications Policy Research, University of Oxford / University of Pennsylvania

<http://pcmlp.socleg.ox.ac.uk/sites/pcmlp.socleg.ox.ac.uk/files/final%201%20ea%20workshop.pdf>

What is the role of the media in exacerbating or resolving post-election disputes? This report presents the findings of a workshop which explored why election violence occurred after some elections and not others, drawing on experiences in Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Somaliland, Tanzania and Sudan. The report suggests three ways of analysing the role the media can play in post-election violence: 1) as an amplifier, facilitating and accelerating the spread of messages that encourage violence or appeal for peaceful resolutions; 2) as a mirror, offering either an accurate or somewhat distorted reflection of the state and nation-building process; and 3) as an enabler, contributing to the process of nation-building.

BBC World Service Trust, 2008, 'The Kenyan 2007 Elections and their Aftermath: The Role of Media and Communication', BBC World Service Trust, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3730>

What role has the media played in Kenyan democracy? To what extent is the media responsible for inflaming the post-election violence of 2008? This briefing draws on semi-structured interviews and a review of research and monitoring material. It finds that the media has both undermined and invigorated democracy; an understanding of democracy in Kenya – and elsewhere – requires a strong understanding of the media's central role in shaping it. Development actors need to provide demand-led, coherent support for public interest media.

Further information on the [role of the media in conflict prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding](#) is available in the GSDRC's Conflict topic guide.

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES

Much of the literature acknowledges that in principle the development of independent, pluralistic, and sustainable media is critical to fostering long-term peace and stability in fragile and conflict-affected states. There is some consensus that the role of the media needs to be understood in developing state-building strategies. Nevertheless, many commentators caution that ill-planned or ill-timed media development strategies can potentially undermine state-building, accentuate state instability and fuel division in society.

In the context of weak and fragile states, where political processes are often unstable and government can lack legitimacy, it cannot be assumed the creation of free and independent media will automatically strengthen civil society, or help establish a democratic system that will hold governments accountable. Media development in fragile states should not overlook the complex realities of existing power and patrimonial relationships in society, and should account for state-building trajectories.

Putzel, J. and van der Zwan, J., 2007, 'Why Templates for Media Development Do Not Work in Crisis States', Crisis States Research Centre, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3743>

How should media policies be adapted in countries affected by crises and war? Do privately owned media contribute to democratic development in fragile states? This report is based on the outcome of discussions at a workshop organised by the Crisis States Research Centre, the Stanhope Centre for Communications and the Annenberg School for Communication. It argues that neo-liberal templates for media development do not work in fragile states and that unsophisticated liberalisation of the media can potentially undermine the state building project.

Bajraktari, Y. and Hsu, E., 2007, 'Developing Media in Stabilisation and Reconstruction Operations', United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3582>

What strategies, tool and methods work best in the development of post-war media institutions? In war-torn societies, the development of an independent, pluralistic, and sustainable media is critical to fostering long-term peace and stability. This report aims to provide guidance by drawing on best practices from past and present post-war media development efforts. A permanent, indigenous mechanism dedicated to monitoring media development is critical to fostering a healthy, independent media sector. It is particularly important to monitor hate speech.

Bratic, V., and Schirch, L., 2008, 'Why and When to Use the Media for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding', GPPAC Issue Paper, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3559>

How can civil society organisations working in conflict prevention and peacebuilding improve their interactions with the media? Why and when should they use the media? This paper argues that different types of media can bring about different types of change. Information programming can encourage cognitive change by increasing knowledge and framing public discussion. Entertainment programming and advertising encourage attitudinal change. The media rarely directly affects behaviour, but it influences attitudes and opinions that shape behaviour. Behavioural change happens through the cumulative impact of the media and other social institutions; an integrated strategy is important.

CASE STUDIES: COMMUNICATION IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES

Bajraktari, Y and Parajon, C., 2008, 'Media and Conflict: Afghanistan as a Relative Success Story', Special Report, United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC

<http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr198.pdf>

UNDP, 2004, 'Supporting Public Service Broadcasting: Learning from Bosnia and Herzegovina's Experience', Democratic Governance Group, UNDP, New York

<http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs04/PublicServiceBroadcasting.pdf>

Raman, V. and Bhanot, A. 2008, 'Political Crisis, Mediated Deliberation and Citizen Engagement: A Case Study of Bangladesh and Nirbachoni Sanglap', IAMCR, Mexico

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/pdf/wstrust/Bangladesh_Sanglap_Governance.pdf

FURTHER RESOURCES

[The Communication Initiative Network: Fragile States](#)

[ICT for peace foundation](#)