DFID
Department for International Development

LESSONS LEARNT IN RESEARCH COMMUNICATION: MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

REPORT OF A LESSON-LEARNING WORKSHOP, DFID, PALACE STREET
2ND AUGUST 2007

OCTOBER 2007

R4D Research for Development

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

CRD	Central Research Department
DFID	Department for International Development
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
R4D	Research 4 Development
RPC	Research Programme Consortium

SUMMARY

01 This is a report of a research communications lesson sharing workshop, organised by DFID's Central Research Department and held in DFID, London during August 2007. The workshop was attended by representatives from 23 RPC, 4 M&E and Communication Specialists and 6 DFID staff

02 The workshop follows-on from one held in 2006. Both workshops had the main objective of providing networking opportunities for RPC and to share lessons on processes for getting research into policy and practice. The second workshop focused on Monitoring and Evaluation and Capacity Development.

03 General discussions around research communication raised a number of points. Two critical ones being:

• The need to develop a framework that integrates research, communication and development values, to allow a common purpose.

• The need for a shared vision of purpose between researchers and those whose primary role is communication, when developing and implementing a communication strategy.

Some felt that DFID had a potential role in facilitating partnerships between those working in research and in advocacy.

04 Discussions on monitoring and evaluation were broad but came back to one central issue – attribution and impact. There was a recommendation that DFID should develop a common framework for assessing and understanding what is impact – especially in research programmes. Emphasis was also placed on the need for a greater knowledge of stakeholders and in-depth stakeholder analysis, for increasing the uptake of research finding and the monitoring and evaluation of this uptake.

05 ON capacity development, discussions were broad and ranged from debates on terminology through to practicalities of implementing a research programme and whether or not we're building the capacity of 'institutions', or individuals. However, capacity building models appropriate in one context are not necessarily successful when transferred to another context.

06 Feedback on the workshop was generally positive. RPC partners see these as valuable learning events and especially for networking across different sectors. Such a workshop provides a forum for research partners to share experiences – both positive and negative – and for DFID to hear these.

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INTRODUCTION

DFID's Current Research Funding Framework 2005-2007 (http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/researchframework/research-framework-2005.pdf) emphasises the importance of putting research into use, and recognises the importance of strategic, integrated research communication in achieving this aim.

All Research Programme Consortia[1] (RPC) are required to develop a Communication Strategy, and to allocate a minimum spend of 10% of their overall research budget to its design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

The first research communication lesson sharing workshop was held in DFID London on 26 July, 2006. This workshop had the broad aim of sharing lessons and experiences from designing research communication strategies. Specific aims of this first workshop were to:

- Provide an opportunity to give feedback to DFID's Central Research Department (CRD) on the process and expectations in designing and implementing a communication strategy

- Give researchers the opportunity to share experiences across research programmes

- Identify how and where CRD can provide support to research programmes on communication

- Create a space for networking across research programmes and to meet with other research programme communications/policy officers to see how resources might be shared.

During this first workshop, the main part of the day was given to presentations from a number of research programmes. The presentations provided an opportunity to share lessons learned; as well as to identify constraints and solutions in designing and implementing the strategies. Following the workshop, participants expressed a desire for greater networking opportunities and for more workshops.

Ongoing monitoring of RPC Communication Strategies by DFID staff revealed a general weakness in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems across most of the research programmes, and wide diversity in the approaches taken to building communications capacities across global teams of researchers and communications officers. Therefore a second workshop was planned for the following year to respond to expressed needs, and to build research communication capacity across DFID-funded research.

A second one-day workshop was held on 2nd August 2007 at DFID, London with the following objectives:

- To learn from best practice M+E techniques practised by RPCs, and broaden understanding of the range of approaches that exist to capture and communicate outcomes and impact

- To share approaches to, and results of, activities to strengthen partner capacities in research communications

[4] RPC is a DFID model for bilaterally funded research programmes

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- To establish and strengthen communication peer groups across RPCs that will provide medium-term communications support; improve communications strategies and outcomes; and build research communication capacity

- To identify priorities to further support research communication (medium and long-term) that can feed into DFID's current Research Strategy, and suggest practical ways for participants to feed these into consultation.

The sections below aim to summarise the main issues raised, key points of discussion and any resulting action points. Section 2, the Workshop Programme covers the main sessions of the day. Section 3 provides a synopsis of the main areas of discussion and Section 4 concludes with some action points for RPCs and DFID. Records of group discussion are provided in the accompanying annexes.

01 The workshop programme

The workshop agenda is given in Annex 1. The main sessions that made up the workshop programme are summarised below.

Introductory Presentations

Tom Engel started the workshop by highlighting key issues of relevance in the light of recent changes in ministerial positions in DFID. Issues highlighted included a perceived danger of complacency, of key messages from the department not reaching the general public and the increasing integration of climate change into DFID's agenda.

He stressed that good communications were seen as important across the department and in reaching the public, many of whom were cynical about spending on aid. Communicating impact, for example how many children whose lives had been saved (rather than how much money had been spent) was seen as important to DFID in communicating with the general public.

Emma Spicer presented on the context for research within DFID. Views are currently being sought to assist DFID in developing its new research strategy [2]. The new strategy is due in April 2008 replacing the current Research Funding Framework that runs from 2005 to 2007. The government's 2006 White Paper[3] gives renewed emphasis to the development of policy based on evidence and research and also provides for a doubling of the research budget.

[2] http://www.dfid.gov.uk/news/files/research-strategy-cons.asp
[3] White Paper: Making Governance Work for the Poor. 13 July 2006.
[4] Available from www.dfid.gov.uk/research or www.research4development.info

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Abigail Mulhall summarised commitments made in the first workshop held in July 2006[4]. There were 11 commitments made at the first workshop: 4 have been achieved, 4 are planned and 3 won't be achieved. Those not being achieved are due to changed priorities and the current consultation process for the new Research Strategy 2008-2013. Annex 7 provides details of these commitments and progress. In summary, most progress has been made on monitoring and evaluation of research communication and in engaging research programmes in activities supported by CRD's communications team. For example, engagement with Mobilising Knowledge for Development (www.ids.ac.uk) and with Makutano Junction (www.makutano.org).

She summarised the broad purpose of the current workshop around two key issues:

- To begin thinking about how to monitor and evaluate research communications

- To discuss what type of capacity is needed to support the development and implementation of communications strategies.

Consensus around these issues and the communication of research more generally will contribute to the new research strategy being developed by DFID in consultation with key stakeholders.

Introductions

Participants introduced themselves by giving their name, organisation and one particularly successful communication in the last year. Highlights included:

- South African policy makers attending a workshop and directly interacting with researchers

- Strengthening internal communications; developing an intranet

- 'marrying' communications values with research values – led to better internal communications and shared vision

- Meeting with local government officials – illustrated the value of face to face communication

- Policy engagement around a cash transfer scheme in Uganda

- Getting 'conservative' researchers to enjoy communication

- Launched a multimedia training programme – including the use of participatory video; produced a brochure, which took a long time as it was tested and many people were consulted

- More than half the battle is to listen (the researchers) to policy makers and practitioners

- Now have 4 document centres, which people are using rather than the internet (slow access)

- Holding a Lancet lecture and child symposium

- Finally having signed off our communication strategy

- Working with Panos on a media resource pack

- M&E – when mentioned to colleagues they don't run for the door

- Participatory video training in Nigeria – seeing partners use the video

- Communication strategy – learning where our key strengths are and having boundary partners to do that work

Group work – M&E of research communications

Group work was facilitated by Liz Carlile. During the morning, group work focused on monitoring and evaluation of research communications. The session was introduced by a presentation on M&E followed by work in small groups.

The presentation, see Annex 3, was based on a scoping study undertaken by Catherine Butcher and Gil Yaron in 2006[5] and summarised findings from the literature, interviews held with practitioners and brief case studies. Areas highlighted as important during the consultations that made up the study included:

- A shared conceptual framework of information flow to assist in design, implementation and M&E of communication strategies, even if the framework is revised and refined at later stages

- Consideration of who should be involved: the importance of an early in-depth stakeholder analysis

- A combination of tools to collect quantitative and qualitative data. A wide range of tools have been used with questionnaires and semi-structured interviews being the most common

A number of challenges had been experienced by practitioners, including the timing of evaluations as research communication is rarely a smooth or linear process, and the challenge of attribution.

Following the presentation, participants worked in pairs to brainstorm challenges experienced in their own work in the M&E of research communications. They then joined small groups to discuss common challenges and suggest solutions to meeting these challenges. Each group then presented a selection of key challenges and associated solutions to the plenary, see Annex 4.

Presentation on R4D

During the lunch period, Martin Parr gave a presentation on R4D summarising content, how the R4D web site was structured and how to use the web site. R4D is an information portal that provides access to information on DFID's centrally funded, long-term research. It provides access to research news and activities, case studies and publications. At present it receives around 17,000 visits/month with an average visit lasting 26 minutes.

Group work – Research communications capacity building

The afternoon session was introduced by Megan Lloyd-Laney, Communications Advisor, Central Research Department. She emphasised that the reason for spending time and money on communications was not for its own sake, but because it is an essential tool in ensuring that research is put to work in the development process.

She proposed three different dimensions of capacity that needed to be in place before an RPC was 'Communications Ready'.

01 People-ready. Both researchers and communications personnel within the RPC are clear about the role of communications in achieving research objectives and have ownership over the Communication

[5] Available at www.healthlink.org.uk/PDFs/scoping.pdf

Strategy that describes how this will be done. Individuals have the necessary skills to be active and effective communicators – or can identify what they need to do in order to become skilled.

02 Systems ready. The structures within the RPC are in place to enable efficient and effective management of the strategy, and processes are designed to actively assist staff and partners to be effective communicators.

03 Learning-enabled. Recognition that influencing policy processes and engaging multiple stakeholders is complex, constantly changing and requires fleet-footed strategies to work effectively. Potential for learning is high, but needs practical and 'embedded' m+e systems in place from the beginning – and a commitment to learning within the RPC – to produce results for the wider community.

Participants then worked in pairs to discuss what a 'built' strategy would look like and key problems experienced in reaching an 'ideal' capacity for a communications strategy. Participants then joined a small group to discuss challenges experienced against each of the following:

• Managing and developing the communications strategy

• Implementing activities

• Internal communications

• Capacity strengthening in partners.

Common themes from each of the groups were then presented see Annex 5, in a plenary session. These are discussed in more detail, under Section 3: Discussion Points, below.

Summing up

Following the group work Abigail Mulhall summarised her reflections and key points of the day. She noted with interest the examples of successful communication given by participants as part of the introduction to themselves and suggested these were the type of successes that should be captured in learning about what is and isn't working, but also to illustrate the vast and varied types of experience. Further areas of note are given below:

• How to engage with DFID country offices and advisers – this needs to be an area considered within communications strategies

• Short time scales of research programmes – there was a feeling that time scales were too short to assess impact.

• Research communications should not be seen as independent from research and evidence gathering – there is a need for greater integration of communication and research.

• Communications could be a "leveller", that this was an area where southern partners often had considerable and often greater contributions to make

• The difficulties of getting senior management buy-in. Is ten per cent of research budget sufficient to secure senior management buy-in? Guidelines on capacity for communications may assist in persuading senior managers that there is a need for communications specialists?

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- Noted that an area that had been little discussed throughout the day was the role of knowledge intermediaries and brokers – an area that could be discussed further either in workshops or on-line (through R4D).

Tracy Tasker provided concluding remarks. She emphasised the increasing drive within DFID for evidence-based policy influencing together with an acknowledgement that agents of change will vary, and change will rarely be a linear process. Communications and the communication of research in particular will have a crucial role to play in these processes. She recognised that there has been a step change in this process with the appointment of dedicated communications specialists.

02 Discussion Points

Throughout the day, from work in groups and discussion in plenary, a range of issues were shared by participants. A number of common themes arose that applied to both the building of capacity for strategy development in the communication of research, and to the monitoring and evaluation of such strategies. These are summarised below under a number of headings:

- Communications infrastructure and geographical distance between northern and southern partners
- Frameworks, stakeholders and a shared common understanding
- Organisational culture and enabling environment
- Attributing policy influence
- Experience sharing across RPCs
- The interface with DFID

In a complex area such as the communication of research, many of the themes were seen as interlinked and as such may not fall neatly into one theme. Constraints in one area frequently led to or increased constraints experienced in other areas.

Communications infrastructure and geographical distance between northern and southern partners.

Differences in capacity in terms of computer hardware and software was said to be in some instances causing a digital divide between southern and northern partners. This impeded communication in very practical ways such as inability to download (large) documents by southern partners. A solution found by one organisation when working with partners limited to low band width was sending documents by CD.

Geographical distance between northern and southern partners often made relationship building and communications including that of M&E between partners difficult. As a consequence "bottom-up" research results were not necessarily shared with other levels. Some participants found monthly telephone

calls, although expensive, helped in establishing and maintaining a relationship between partners and also allowed partners to share and monitor verbally as well as in a written form. Tele-conferencing and video conferencing was also suggested as a way of improving internal communications in M&E and more generally. It was suggested that this was a facility DFID country offices might be able to develop.

Frameworks, stakeholders and common understanding

Some participants felt that there was no common language for dealing with impact, that there were frequently contrasting visions around the definition of impact and suggested that DFID had a role in developing a common framework of what impact is. Other terms were seen as needing unpacking to develop a clearer understanding including "capacity" and "development". The integration of research, communication and development values was seen as needing to be set in a framework to allow a common purpose.

Building in communications strategies and M&E from the start of an RPC was seen as important for success. Participants identified the need for a shared vision of purpose between researchers and those with a communications role for a successful communications strategy. Outcome mapping was seen as useful in looking at M&E due to the non-linearity of the processes involved.

In some instances it was felt that the research itself was not framed in the right way or that there was a failure to have key research messages. This made the development of a research communications strategy difficult. In M&E it was seen as important to be aware of what is actually being evaluated and this may entail working backwards from, for example, policy makers as well as working forwards from the source of results.

Greater knowledge of stakeholders and in-depth stakeholder analysis was seen as a requirement for increasing the uptake of research findings and in the monitoring and evaluation of this uptake. Greater understanding of and the "mapping of movers and shakers" was needed as in many contexts there was poor understanding of social and political processes. It was suggested that communication frequently needs to be audience specific thus implying greater knowledge of stakeholders that a communication strategy is trying to reach.

Organisational culture and enabling environment

An area that was raised by several groups during discussion as well as in the plenary was that of organisational culture. Constraints expressed in this area included reluctance of researchers to engage in a communications culture (though others expressed a view that researchers did want to communicate but heavy work loads and competing priorities prevented them from having the time to do so), lack of technical writing skills and too much emphasis on the written word. It was said that in this environment it was difficult to enable southern voices to be heard. Others noted that status is important in who gets listened to and in which contexts and that acknowledgement of this can allow its use to increase communication.

A lack of a knowledge-sharing culture was raised as a key constraint. As part of this it was seen as important to raise the question "is everyone taking responsibility for sharing or do they see it as the sole

responsibility of the communications person?" An area that was raised in several groups was the question of senior management buy-in. A divide was frequently seen to exist between communication specialists and researchers accentuated when communication specialists are employed at a relatively low level. Others saw the need for better linkages between researchers and advocacy. It was felt that DFID had a potential role in facilitating partnerships between those working in research and in advocacy.

Positive outcomes and success stories were said not only to have a valuable role within evaluation but also in motivating individuals and organisations to communicate. As well as success stories, "unsuccess" stories were also seen as useful for learning. Creating an environment where failure is acceptable was seen as important. It was also noted that there was frequently no culture of generating qualitative data.

In assessing capacity needs it was suggested that rather than always concentrating on gaps in capacity, it was helpful to build on what was already known. The need for capacity building is not limited to southern partners, and that in many circumstances southern capacity in communication is greater than their northern counterparts. It was also noted that capacity raising models appropriate in one context could not necessarily be successfully transferred. For example where a northern partner has a policy officer, this does not necessarily mean that a southern partner needs one too.

A question was raised, but not necessarily answered, in terms of capacity building was "do we invest in institutional capacity or individual capacity?"

Attributing policy influence

At least one group raised the question "who M&E" was for and within M&E there is frequently an underlying tension between the needs of different stakeholder groups in terms of M&E and the learning it generates.

A challenge raised by several groups and in the plenary was that of attribution. Although on-going monitoring and the incorporation of qualitative methods was seen as going some way to allowing the attribution of policy influence to the actions of a particular team or project, this is an area that remains a challenge. In addition attribution in some circumstances is politically sensitive, and in others taking credit is inappropriate.

Experience sharing across RPCs

Sharing experiences across RPCs was seen as helpful and R4D was seen as having a role to play by making communication strategies available. The contact list provided in the workshop and through R4D's Communications Corner (expected end September) will allow RPC teams to contact each other. There was a request for some categorisation of RPCs so that patterns in M&E, capacity building of other issues could be identified. R4D could make proformas used for monitoring available for sharing. R4D was said to be "as rich as users make it".

A note of caution was raised in that RPCs come in different sizes, some of which may be quite small and therefore lessons that, for example apply to an RPC with many resources may not directly apply to an RPC working on a much smaller scale.

The possibility of sharing staff across RPCs was raised.

The interface with DFID

It was felt that the interface between RPCs and DFID needs improvement or at least greater clarification. Linkages with DFID in terms of out-scaling were seen as an area that also needed clarification and particularly in-country, linkages were seen as blurred with no clear contact with geographical desks. However DFID is not a homogenous group and therefore should be analysed for opportunities in the same way as other stakeholder groups. Communication strategies should then be built on this analysis.

A question was raised around what kind of organisational format DFID was looking at in the next research funding round. The point was made that only after several years of undertaking an RPC are teams able to have something meaningful to say about communications of research. If the next round is to be led by, for example, African universities, then there is going to be a different mix of opportunities and constraints.

Further ideas

A couple of practical ideas for the communication of research were suggested. These were the use of text messaging to spread messages. Text messaging was said to be reliable and could be linked to the internet. A further idea suggested was of a gallery in DFID building entrances to catch the eye of those that enter DFID.

03 Conclusions

A number of key challenges were seen as being shared by many of the RPCs.

- Poor understanding of context

- Infrastructure

- Technical writing and communication skills

- Motivation to change

- Buy-in at researcher and higher levels

- Tools and processes for good communications

- Importance of strategic development at the beginning

- Culture of communicating and use of mentoring to change status

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Opportunities and constraints raised during the day were summed up under the following questions:

- So what does this tell us about:

01 What RPCs can do for themselves?

02 What RPCs can do with and for each other?

03 What DFID can do to support RPCs and integrate or recommend in their next research strategy?

Discussions during the plenary were recorded and summarised under a number of action points in the matrix below.

- "Individual RPCs" refers to Question 1 – What can RPCs do for themselves?

- "Across RPCs" refers to Question 2 – What can RPCs do for each other?

- "For DFID" refers to Question 3 – What can DFID do to support RPCs and integrate or recommend in their next research strategy?

- "All" refers to actions that can be undertaken by DFID and RPCs.

Individual RPCs	Across RPCs
Categories of projects revealing patterns of communications	Lobby for greater access to information (infrastructure)
Practical joint working across partners	Explore new technology to communicate internally
Cognisance of constraints of researchers & seeking active partnerships outside academia	Collective liaising profile clusters of research in DFID
Unpacking "doing better" development & its values	Sharing staff across RPCs

For DFID	All
Engage in conversation	Sequencing of communications capacity
Better integration between DFID and its policy	Communications is audience and context specific
"Crude & reductive" framework	
Guidance on implementation	
Inclusion of non-CRD funded research in R4D	
Unpacking "doing better" development & its values	

ANNEX 1: WORKSHOP AGENDA

Time	Session	Presenter/Facilitator
09.30	Arrival and Coffee	–
10.00	Welcome	Tom Engel, Director, Strategic Communications DFID Emma Spicer, Deputy Head, CRD
10.20	Purpose of the workshop	Abigail Mulhall, Team Leader, Communications, CRD
10.30	Introductions	Liz Carlile, Facilitator, IIED
11.00	M&E session: presentation & group work	Cathy Butcher, M&E Specialist Liz Carlile
12.30	Plenary	Liz Carlile
13.00	Lunch and presentation of R4D	Martin Parr, R4D Programme Manager, CABI
14.00	Communications capacity building	Megan Lloyd-Laney, Communications Specialist, CRD Liz Carlile
15.30	Plenary	Liz Carlile
16.45	Summing up	Abigail Mulhall
17.00	Final comments	Tracy Tasker

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ANNEX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

RPC	Institution	Participant	Contact
HD3 Research and Capacity Building in Reproductive and Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS in developing countries	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Tamsin Kelk (Communications Officer)	tamsin.kelk@lshtm.ac.uk
HD4 – Realising Rights: improving sexual and reproductive health for poor and vulnerable populations	Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (IDS)	Samantha Reddin (Communications Officer)	s.reddin@ids.ac.uk k.brincklow@ids.ac.uk
HD106 – Future Health Systems: Making Health Systems Work for the Poor			
HD5 – Achieving MDGs 4 and 5	Centre for International Health and Development Institute for Child Health University College London	Sarah Ball (Research Administrator) David Osrin (Clinical Research Fellow)	s.ball@ich.ucl.ac.uk
HD7 – Effective Health Care Alliance Programme	Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM)	Helen Smith	cjdhel@liv.ac.uk
HD105 – Consortium for Research on Equitable Health Systems	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Nicola Lord	Nicola.lord@lshtm.ac.uk
HD 205 – TARGETS	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Alexandra Coldham Clare Sullivan Jo Lines	alexandra.coldham@lshtm.ac.uk clare.sullivan@lshtm.ac.uk
HD 206 COMDIS	Nuffield Centre for International Health & Development, University of Leeds (NCIHD)/ Malaria Consortium	Sunil Mehra	s.mehra@malariaconsortium.org
HD 8 Educational Outcomes and Poverty	Centre for Commonwealth Education, University of Cambridge	Bolormaa Shagdar	bs364@cam.ac.uk
HD 9 Implementing Education Quality in Low income countries	Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol	Angeline Barrett	angeline.barrett@bris.ac.uk

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RPC	Institution	Participant	Contact
HD 10 Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE)	Centre for International Education, University of Sussex (CIE)	Frances Hunt (Communications Manager)	F.M.Hunt@sussex.ac.uk
HD 11 Treatment and Care HIV	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	Annabelle South (Admin and Comms Manager)	Annabelle.South@lshtm.ac.uk
Centre for the Future State	Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (IDS)	Camilla Walsh Nardia Simpson	–
Citizenship, participation and Accountability DRC	Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (IDS)	Joanna Wheeler Alison Dunn (Research and Communications Officer)	J.Wheeler@ids.ac.uk A.Dunn@ids.ac.uk
Chronic Poverty Research Centre	Overseas Development Institute (ODI)	Julia Brunt	j.brunt@odi.org.uk
Migration, Globalisation and Poverty	University of Sussex	Saskia Gent (Comms officer) Dr Meera Warrier (Research Manager)	s.e.gent@sussex.ac.uk m.warrier@sussex.ac.uk
Drivers of Women's Empowerment (Muslim States)	Southeast Asia Research Centre, City University of Hong Kong (SEARC)	Vivienne Wee (Director) Lin Chew (Communication Desk Coordinator)	v.wee@cityu.edu.hk l.chew@cityu.edu.hk
Research into Use (Sustainable Agriculture Research Programme)	Natural Resources International Limited (NRIL);	Wyn Richards	w.richards@nrint.co.uk
Power, Politics and the State	Overseas Development Institute (ODI)	Laura Jarque	l.jarque@odi.org.uk
Young Lives	Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford	Caroline Knowles (Communications Manager)	caroline.knowles@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Research Inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile Region (RIPPLE)	International Water and Sanitation Centre, Westvest 7 2611 AX Delft The Netherlands	Ton Schouten	schouten@Irc.nl

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Institutions and Pro-Poor Growth (Manchester)	University of Manchester; University of York	Frances Bowcock	frances.bowcock@manchester.ac.uk Adrian Leftwich al23@york.ac.uk
Institutions and Pro-Poor Growth (Oxford)	Centre for the Study of African Economies, University of Oxford (CSAE)	Rose Page	rose.page@economics.ox.ac.uk
HD6 Mental Health Policy in Africa	Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, University of Cape Town	No representative expected	Professor Alan Flisher alan@rmh.uct.ac.za
HD12 Social Context of HIV	Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM)	No representative expected	Teresa Jackson (Consortia Manager) t.jackson@liverpool.ac.uk
IMMPACT Maternal mortality	Dugald Baird Centre for Research on Women's Health, University of Aberdeen	No representative expected	Lisa Davidson lisa.davidson@abdn.ac.uk
Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE)	Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford	No representative expected	Frances.stewart@qeh.ox.ac.uk Jo.boyce@qeh.ox.ac.uk
Responses to Crisis States and Breakdown DRC	London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)	No representative expected	w.foulds@lse.ac.uk
Faiths in Development	International Development Department, School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham (IDD)	No representative expected	Carole Rakodi c.rakodi@bham.ac.uk
Drivers of Women's Empowerment	Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (IDS)	No representative expected	JennyEdwardsj.edwards@ids.ac.uk

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OTHERS

RPC	Institution	Participant	Contact
MK4D evaluation team	University of Manchester; University of York	Graham Haylor	ghaylor@googlemail.com
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ODI	ODI	Nick Scott M+E specialist	N.Scott@odi.org.uk
IIED	–	Liz Carlisle Facilitator	Liz.Carlilse@iied.org
consultant	–	Cathy Butcher M+E specialist, co-author Scoping Study	cb@socialdev.co.uk
Research4Development	CIMRC/CABI	Martin Parr	m.parr@cabi.org
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	Participant	Contact
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	Alan Hamilton Programme Officer	Alan-Hamilton@dfid.gov.uk
	Tracy Tasker CRD Strategic Advisor	T-Tasker@dfid.gov.uk.uk

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ANNEX 3: PRESENTATION ON M&E OF RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS

Scoping Study

Monitoring and Evaluation of Research Communications

Cathy Butcher, August 2007

Three Key Questions…

- What approaches have been used in monitoring and evaluation of research communications?
- What tools are being used?
- Is there anything special about the M&E of research communications?

Cathy Butcher, August 2007

Some definitions …

- Research: systematic learning from theory building to action research, by NGOs, academics, poor communities, etc.
- Communication: dialogue, exchange of information, negotiation, decision-making, etc.
- Monitoring: collection, analysis of information on progress
- Evaluation: assessment of value, worth or impact

Cathy Butcher, August 2007

How has M&E been approached?

- Frameworks
  - Often based on a series of key questions
  - Often based on logframes
  - Some have looked at mapping information flow
  - From the literature – Theory of Change, Network Analysis or other ways of visualising route to impact and/or key relationships.

Cathy Butcher, August 2007

Who should be involved?

- Primary stakeholders / ultimate beneficiaries at the target site
- Intermediate stakeholders
- National level target institutions
- International level target level institutions
- Those beyond the target site
  (adapted from Natural Resources Systems Programme, DFID)

- Early stakeholder analysis will help both project design and M&E - A number of those involved in evaluations highlighted this as an area of weakness

Cathy Butcher, August 2007

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1. How? Tools and Methods

- Monitoring – some examples
  - Web statistics
  - Number of articles produced
  - Workshops and meetings
  - Questionnaires
  - Interviews / discussions
  - Systematic collection of anecdotes
  - Advisory groups, peer reviews

Cathy Butcher, August 2007

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3. How? Tools and Methods

- Further methods
  - Secret ballots
  - Case studies
  - Most significant change method
  - Citizens' juries
  - Citation analysis
  - Budget expenditure tracking
    (from the literature)

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3. How? Tools and Methods

- Further methods
  - Secret ballots
  - Case studies
  - Most significant change method
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    (from the literature)

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1. Challenges experienced
(from telephone discussions & literature)

- Stakeholders and/or models of information flow between stakeholders may not be clearly defined
- Spot reviews may give a misleading picture, particularly where uptake does not follow a smooth path
- Unknown biases in samples where respondents are self-selecting
- Attribution may be difficult due to large number of variables
- Identifying non-users

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2. Challenges experienced –
(from telephone discussions & literature)

- Participatory methods are time consuming both for intended beneficiaries and in terms of the resources frequently allocated to M&E
- Cultural factors – intended beneficiaries may not want to seem rude to outsiders
- Timing – long-term and sustainable benefits may not occur within the lifetime of the intervention
- Designing &/or carrying out questionnaires and semi-structure interviews may be difficult

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Is there anything special about M&E of Research Communications?

- Tradition of dissemination of academic research through peer-reviewed journals
- Importance of relationships in uptake
- Importance of defining stakeholders, relationships and pathways
- Desired outcomes are often qualitative in nature
- Often cumulative and long-term nature

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ANNEX 4: GROUP WORK - CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN M&E?

Challenges	Solutions
How to measure impact?	Focus on understanding networks
Attribution	Stages on path to objective
Networks of influence	–
Proxies, e.g. change in agenda at meetings	–
Differences in language use across disciplines	New linguistic terms
Different models of research	Clarity from start on what researchers want to see changed at the end
Gathering qualitative M&E data	Building M&E into project processes so it is everybody's responsibility
Generating but-in to measuring impacts & integrating into project processes	Marketing to the team
	Importance and usefulness to project objectives Providing incentives
Time frame for capturing impacts and attribution of impact	Building relationships
Sensitivity of attribution in relation to policy influencing	
Collecting information	Systematic reporting
	Partners' meetings, peer support
Attribution	e.g. anecdotes
	qualitative data
Identifying stakeholders	Peer support
	Partners
	Importance/influence
How to use monitoring information to evaluation	??
Centralised communications	Partners
Mapping research Qu.	Matrix
Knowing what info. targets want	Analyse info. available
	Separate strategies
	Consultation

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ANNEX 4: GROUP WORK - CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN M&E?

Challenges	Solutions
Designing useful logframes, indicators and reviewing logframes	Focus on understanding networks
Quantitative indicators do not touch use/ impact	Stages on path to objective
Are DFID country offices well informed/have capacity to use research? What do they want to know and how do we get this to them?	–
Web hits – so what?	–
Distinguishing between researchers researchers; researchers others	New linguistic terms
Generic v. specific strategies	Clarity from start on what researchers want to see changed at the end
Attribution	Building M&E into project processes so it is everybody's responsibility Marketing to the team Importance and usefulness to project objectives Providing incentives
'Fuzzy' working environment	Building relationships
Ensuring 'top-down' & 'bottom-up' approaches	Systematic reporting Partners' meetings, peer support
Making M&E more acceptable across programme	e.g. anecdotes qualitative data
Policy recommendations versus changing discourse	Peer support Partners Importance/influence
'Negative ' results, project 'failure'	??
Bottom-up research getting to the top	Partners
Policy makers rapidly moving on	Matrix
Indifferent DFID in country offices	Analyse info. available Separate strategies Consultation

R4D Research for Development

ANNEX 4: GROUP WORK - CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN M&E?

Challenges	Solutions
'Negative ' results, project 'failure'	??
Bottom-up research getting to the top	Partners
Policy makers rapidly moving on	Matrix
Indifferent DFID in country offices	Analyse info. available
	Separate strategies
	Consultation
Evaluating for someone else's goals	Tracking forwards & tracking backwards

How to maintain 'participation'?

- Quantity vs Quality

- How early to integrate communications and communications M&E

- Research may not articulate "impact"

- Broadcast results without follow-up to ascertain impact

- How to keep researchers "on" strategy

- Different levels of M&E

- Measuring impact on policy

- Beyond reaching audiences

- Impact in short time frame

- Capacity to do M&E

- Who is M&E for?

- Who did it? Political sensitivity

- Measuring in different policy contexts, differences in communication contexts

Challenges	Solutions
How to measure impact	Outcome mapping
	Clarity from start on what researchers want to change
Recognising different effects of different types of research	Matrix – research & type of change envisaged

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ANNEX 5: GROUP WORK – COMMUNICATIONS CAPACITY BUILDING

What would built capacity look like?

- Lobbying in country
    - Database
    - Training
    - Networking

- Identify champions and specialist writers
- Integrated communications/culture
- Up-scaling / out-scaling
- Tailored communications strategies in country
- Raising awareness for end users
- Ever growing sustainable capacity

Getting started	Implementation	Developing capacity
How to get clear, context-specific strategies capacity to build a meaningful strategy	Needs assessment	Within RPC network
Lack of commitment to comms & programme	Look at how knowledge that is already there is being used	Within 'research'
Listening skills (iterative)	Staff turnover	Policy & Practice
How to pick themes at the beginning? How to find out what is going to have resonance?	Staffing levels	Partner relationships
Key persons to drive CB	Right training for right people	How do you connect the development of capacity to the evolution of the network
Incentives for impact	Ability to present to lay person audiences (inexperience – or too experienced)	
Success story ranking and analysis	Institutional versus individual capacity	
Time	Difficulties in building capacity in southern countries	
	Structural issues	
	Funding	

Key problems to building capacity

- Reluctance of researchers to communicate in RC

- How to create a communications culture

- Distance (geographical) to reach out to southern partners

- Language and culture

- Lack of communication skills of researchers (soft skills)

- Too much emphasis on written word

- Lack of technical communication skills

- Reluctance of higher management

- Budget is a constraint

- Lack of innovation (reliance on conventional style)

- Communication environment is not always conducive to uptake

- Underdeveloped infrastructure (low band width)

- Conflicting institutional agendas for communications

- Information overload (email)

- Some people not conversant with high-tech

- Gate-keepers to information access

Challenges (from plenary)

01 Poor understanding of context

02 Infrastructure

03 Technical writing and comms skills

04 Motivation to change

05 Buy-in at researcher and higher levels

06 Tools and processes for good comms

07 Importance of strategic development at the beginning

08 Culture of comms and use of mentoring to change status

ANNEX 6: PROGRESS WITH COMMITMENTS MADE AT WORKSHOP 1

Commitment	Progress
What does DFID require each RPC to report on and capture in lesson learning on communication strategies?	DFID has produce M&E guidance notes for research programmes (available from www.dfid.gov.uk/research). A 2-day M&E Research Communication Workshop was held in September 2006 and this produced a literature review, workshop report and briefing paper[7]. This work is on-going and a group of like-minded researchers meets quarterly to discuss issues around communication and M&E. A 2-day RPC learning event was held in September 2007. A report is available from www.dfid.gov.uk)
Activities funded by Comms Team and how to make contact	Standard project information, regular contributions from research programmes, such as case studies and news stories should go on R4D. Opportunities have also been provided to put relevant work on the DFID website and DFID's intranet, Insight. Direct contact has been made with programmes such as Makutano Junction (to date around 5 research programmes have provided research findings that have been written into storylines in Makutano Junction. Main storylines have also been simplified in follow-up leaflets, which are mailed to interested viewers (interest is expressed through sending an SMS to Makutano Junction team).
R4D Communications corner to share lessons learnt, literature, etc.	The Communications corner was meant to go live in July. Technical problems have delayed this activity. By October the communications corner should be live. Research programmes are encouraged to provide material, especially on lessons (positive and negative) and experiences to populate this area of R4D. A timeline of external events will also be put in this corner.

[7] Available from www.research4development.info – see monitoring and evaluation

R4D Research for Development

Commitment	Progress
Revise the DFID research communications guidance notes. **Provide guidance on moving from strategic to 'how-to-do'**	The Communications corner was meant to go live in July. Technical problems have delayed this activity. By October the communications corner should be live. Research programmes are encouraged to provide material, especially on lessons (positive and negative) and experiences to populate this area of R4D. A timeline of external events will also be put in this corner.
Guidance notes on communication learning	The current notes were written to assist research programmes in the initial design of a communication strategy. There was a request to revise these to provide guidance on implementation. This activity is delayed, though a number of background studies are being conducted that will inform a new version of guidance notes. We are still considering a publication that documents practical experiences with putting in place research communication strategies.
A workshop to meet DFID policy makers	We are in the process of collating experiences on research communication that have been gained during mid-term reviews of some of the health research programmes. We also intend to summarise key points from research programme annual reports.
DFID will identify opportunities to continue cross-programme collaboration on aspects of communication	Learning from mid-term reviews of some of the health and education research programmes will be documented. We will aim to have another lesson learning workshop early next year.

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ANNEX 7: WORKSHOP EVALUATION

ONE GOOD THING ABOUT THE DAY

- To learn about the great diversity of RPCs and discuss daily, practical problems of developing and implementing a communications strategy in an RPC.

- I was calmed by a clear understanding that I am part of a group that is trying to work out what to do about communications, rather than an RPC that is expected to fulfil a specific expectation.

- Facilitation, agenda, structure, lunch.

- Small group discussion meant that the day was not dominated by a few vocal people.

- I now have the name of a policy maker in DFID and also learn of the strengthening between evidence and policy within DFID. Lunch was great.

- Good small groups – enjoyed discussion.

- Realising the "mousetrap problem" is why conversations inevitably lead to discussions about impact.

- Networking and sharing problems with like-minded people. We ought to meet more frequently, 2 times per annum.

- A chance to talk in a small group that included someone from DFID.

- An opportunity to learn from each other – we had a lot more time for networking.

- Exploring challenges and solutions, re: M&E worked well, i.e. a balance between discussing +ve and –ve issues.

- R4D presentation.

- Knowing that our experiences are shared across RPCs (not enough time, lack of sufficient information flow but also opportunities for successful influencing).

- Critical discussion.

- Information sharing, networking and sharing best practice stories (and sharing problems!).

- Group discussion was useful and interesting.

- Cross-centre learning and sharing experience.

- Good opportunities for networking.

- Really good group work – I learnt a lot. Definitely keep this.

- Liked idea of group work as a whole and opportunities as a whole

- Small group discussion

- Great learning and networking opportunity, re: RPCs and R4D

- Good opportunities for networking

- Mix of people from RPCs but also some not so involved in RPCs but with specialist or relevant knowledge

ONE BAD THING ABOUT THE DAY

- I think it would be very good to exchange models, tools and methods (internal and external) communication in RPCs, success stories, failures, etc.

- If we are examining evidence we have not examined the evidence for the basis of DFID's drive towards an emphasis on communications strategies. After 2 years I sense that there are wide variations in conviction between members of the wider group.

- A day is too short!

- Can't think of anything!

- All groups I believe would have been able to achieve more with a DFID person present.

- Horrible acoustics in the room, particularly difficult to hear what was said in the afternoon.

- Focussing on problems in the afternoon felt quite negative – if the remit had been to balance these with solutions/successes our discussion would have gone better!

- Capacity workshop was a bit too long.

- Not sufficient sharing of the content of different RPCs and what this implies for communication.

- Discussions/presentation that is too generalised and hence not useful for developing RPC activities and strategies.

- Linear chairs formation (on a practical note!) Horse-shoe next time please.

- Would have been useful to see different monitoring tools to inform discussion.

- Afternoon session was too similar to morning (although topic different). A different style might have been more energising.

- Because groups worked close, sometimes difficult to hear, generate discussion in groups – heard other groups instead.

- The M&E session presentation was something many people here had heard before. Try something new.

- Second group work should have been facilitated more – too rambling. Didn't feel it worked.

- Long session after lunch, think 2 shorter sessions might have been more productive.

- I have run many workshops around Asia and always imagine that the hierarchical podium-audience start that is almost obligatory would not happen in the UK.

- Need more information about M&E tools.

- Possibly could do with happening more often and covering not just strategic subjects, but more practical peer-assisted sessions.

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THE DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: LEADING THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S FIGHT AGAINST WORLD POVERTY.