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Research and Policy  
in Development



toolkit

# Successful Communication

A Toolkit for Researchers  
and Civil Society  
Organisations

Ingie Hovland



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Civil Society Organisations

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# Introduction

## 1. Background

It is sometimes assumed that we need more communication of evidence within the international development field. This is not necessarily true. More communication can simply end up as a form of ‘pushing knowledge down a hosepipe, in the hope that at least some of it will come out the other end’.<sup>1</sup> What we need is far *better* communication of evidence within the international development field. This handbook is therefore designed to help development actors communicate better. It presents 23 tools, divided into the following categories: ‘Planning’, ‘Packaging’, ‘Targeting’ and ‘Monitoring’.

Communication is crucial in development – whether in the form of dissemination, guidelines, prescriptions, recommendations, advocacy, promotion, persuasion, education, conversation, roundtables, consultations, dialogue, counselling or entertainment. Sometimes, providing information is the most powerful strategy available. Information is a tool that helps people help themselves, in a ‘fishing-pole-rather-than-fish’ sort of way. Information is also the lever that people need to hold government accountable and to ensure transparency in participative and empowering processes. As one development communicator has put it ‘They say sunlight is the best disinfectant, well let the sunlight in!’<sup>2</sup>

But communication is often about more than providing information. It is about fostering social awareness and facilitating public democratic dialogue. It is about contributing to evidence-based policy, and about building a shared understanding which can lead to social change. It is about creating space for the voices of the poor to be heard, and, ultimately, it is about redistributing power. However, these positive effects of communication do not come automatically. More communication does not automatically mean more development. In fact, in certain situations, disempowering or esoteric communication dynamics can dramatically *hinder* development – just think of gender and power issues, or the provision of incorrect information. This is why it is important to communicate *better*. We hope this toolkit can help.

## The RAPID programme

This toolkit builds on the previous work and experience of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), especially its Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) programme. RAPID aims to improve the use of research and evidence in development policy and practice through research, advice and debate. The RAPID programme has four main themes:

- The *use of evidence* in policy identification, development and implementation;
- Improving *communication and information* systems for development agencies;
- Improving *knowledge management* to enhance the impact of development agencies;
- Promotion and *capacity building* for evidence-based policy.

Further information is available on the RAPID website at: [www.odi.org.uk/rapid](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid). Previous relevant RAPID publications include a literature review on communication,<sup>3</sup> a literature review on knowledge management,<sup>4</sup> a working paper on knowledge strategies,<sup>5</sup> and a handbook on ‘Tools for Policy Impact’.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Barnett, Andrew (4 April 2005) ‘Reducing poverty needs an ‘innovation system’ approach’, SciDev.Net, available at [www.scidev.net/dossiers/index.cfm?fuseaction=dossierReadItem&type=3&itemid=374&language=1&dossier=13](http://www.scidev.net/dossiers/index.cfm?fuseaction=dossierReadItem&type=3&itemid=374&language=1&dossier=13).

<sup>2</sup> Rick Davies ([www.mande.co.uk](http://www.mande.co.uk)).

<sup>3</sup> Hovland, Ingie (2003) ‘Communication of Research for Poverty Reduction: A Literature Review’ *ODI Working Paper 227*, London: ODI ([www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/WP227.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/WP227.pdf)).

<sup>4</sup> Hovland, Ingie (2003) ‘Knowledge Management and Organisational Learning: An International Development Perspective’ *ODI Working Paper 224*, London: ODI ([www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/WP224.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/WP224.pdf)).

A complementary toolkit on ‘Knowledge and Learning’<sup>7</sup> may be especially helpful for anyone using the present toolkit on communication. RAPID is now beginning a process of identifying, developing and using tools and resources that can help a range of actors improve their communication. The present toolkit should therefore be seen as work in progress.

## Target audience: researchers and practitioners in CSOs

This toolkit is for researchers and practitioners who wish to communicate to policymakers. The tools are therefore specifically geared towards the needs of researchers and practitioners in civil society organisations (CSOs), including development NGOs, research institutes, think tanks, universities and networks. The toolkit addresses the questions of how researchers and CSOs can best communicate evidence in order to inform or influence policy, to achieve their own stated development objectives, or simply to make their own knowledge accessible and understandable to a wider audience.

## 2. Why communicate?

### To inspire and inform

We usually communicate evidence, information and knowledge in order to *inspire* and *inform* development policy and practice. In order to improve our communication, there are several steps we can take to make it more inspirational and informative. The first step is simply to think through why we are communicating in the first place.

Let us briefly look at one example. This question has recently been addressed in Omamo’s article ‘Policy Research on African Agriculture’.<sup>8</sup> Omamo argues that agricultural economists have failed to put Africa’s agricultural problems on the policy agenda in anything more than an abstract fashion. He suggests that this is because researchers and CSOs have failed to come to grips with the real problems facing *policymakers* in the agricultural sector in Africa, namely the operational feasibility of alternative policy options. In other words, the policy options that are outlined in research publications have failed to capture policymakers’ attention and to connect with them. There has been a distinct failure in communication.

The tools that are included in this toolkit aim to rectify this kind of situation. The first steps to take are to begin asking questions: Why is the knowledge not being used to inform policy and practice? Has it been appropriately targeted? Has it been communicated clearly? Is it easily accessible? Why is the knowledge not experienced as inspirational? What does it take for research to inspire? What is it that makes some groups notice and connect with certain pieces of evidence, while other evidence is easily ignored?

There is no single, best, generic solution to these questions. The best answers will vary from project to project and from situation to situation. But the tools that have been included here – especially those under ‘Packaging’ and ‘Targeting’ – will especially help to show how evidence can be communicated in order to inform and inspire.

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<sup>5</sup> Ramalingam, Ben (2005) ‘Implementing Knowledge Strategies: Lessons from International Development Agencies’ *ODI Working Paper 244*, London: ODI ([www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/WP244.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/publications/documents/WP244.pdf)).

<sup>6</sup> Start, Daniel and Ingie Hovland (2004) ‘Tools for Policy Impact: A Handbook for Researchers’, London: ODI ([www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/Tools\\_handbook\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/Tools_handbook_final_web.pdf)).

<sup>7</sup> Ramalingam, Ben (2005) ‘Tools for Knowledge and Learning’, *RAPID Toolkit*, London: ODI ([www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM\\_toolkit\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM_toolkit_web.pdf)).

<sup>8</sup> Omamo, Steven Were (2003) ‘Policy Research on African Agriculture: Trends, Gaps and Challenges’ *International Service for National Agricultural Research Report No 21/2003*, available free of charge at [www.isnar.cgiar.org](http://www.isnar.cgiar.org).



## To learn

Communication, when it is done well, does not only benefit the ‘recipient’. It also benefits the ‘sender’. This aspect of communication is often overlooked. We tend to think of communication as a process of teaching others – or of telling others everything we know (‘spread the good news!’). But communication is also a process whereby the ‘senders’ themselves can learn a lot. If we think strategically about the communication process, we can maximise our own benefits too.

We learn different things by using a range of communication activities, or by *strategically choosing* the communication activity that will give us most information in return. For example, by putting documents on the web, and tracking which of them are downloaded or picked up by other websites, it is possible to get a sense of which topics spark an interest in which networks. By hosting workshops or public meetings, it is possible to get a sense of which research is regarded as credible, and which is not. By asking for feedback as part of our communication activities, it is possible to get a sense of the needs and frustrations of the target audience, and therefore of how we might increase the impact of our knowledge.

Let us look at another example – again from the agricultural sector in Africa. In their article ‘Promoting Research-Policy Dialogues’, Mortimore and Tiffen<sup>9</sup> suggest that if you already know who your target audience is, then the best way to ensure that they regard your research findings as credible and useful is to engage in two-way communication with them. The dryland development projects described in the article had to engage with many different target groups, including scientists, national level policymakers, donors, NGO staff and the beneficiaries themselves. Each of these groups has different communication needs. They access information in different ways, they have different perceptions of credibility, and they are used to seeing research results in different formats and at different times. Therefore, the more we are able to *engage with each group* in a meaningful process of communication, the more likely we are to learn how to maximise the uptake and impact of our research.

In this regard, it is useful to think of how one might build up communication capacity over a *longer time period*. Programmes cannot become ‘learning systems’ unless they go through a few cycles or iterations. Again, there is no single, generic, best solution here. But the tools that follow – especially those under ‘Planning’ – should be of help when thinking strategically about how communication can improve learning and build capacity.

## 3. The literature on research communication

There is already considerable literature on *communication of research*, in and for development. Based on RAPID’s literature review of around 100 books and articles on communication of research for poverty reduction, the following recommendations sum up some of the received wisdom in this field:<sup>10</sup>

*How to improve communication of research to policymakers:*

- Strengthen researchers’ communication skills (in order to get the target group right, get the format right, get the timing right, etc.).
- Aim for close collaboration between researchers and policymakers.
- Construct an appropriate platform from which to communicate (a platform of broad engagement, e.g. a public campaign, is more likely to be heard).

<sup>9</sup> Mortimore, Michael and Mary Tiffen (2003) ‘Promoting Research-Policy Dialogues: Lessons from Four Studies of Dryland Development in Sub-Saharan Africa’ *Drylands Research Working Paper* No 41, available free of charge at [www.drylandsresearch.org.uk](http://www.drylandsresearch.org.uk).

<sup>10</sup> Hovland, Ingie (2003) ‘Communication of Research for Poverty Reduction: A Literature Review’ *ODI Working Paper* 227, London: ODI ([www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/WP227.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/WP227.pdf)).

## Successful Communication

- Strengthen institutional policy capacity for uptake (government departments may not be able to use research because of lack of staff or organisational capacity).

### *How to improve communication of research to (other) researchers:*

- Strengthen Southern research capacity in order to enable Southern researchers to access Northern-produced research.
- Support research networks, especially electronic and/or regional networks.
- Continue with dissemination of development research, through for example the id21 format – popular with academics.

### *How to improve communication of research to end users (i.e. the poor and organisations working with the poor):*

- Incorporate communication activities into project design, taking into account, for example, gender, local context and existing ways of communicating, and possibilities for new ways of communicating through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).
- Encourage user engagement, map existing information demand and information-use environment, and promote participative communication for empowerment.
- Create an enabling environment (as failure to use research/information is not always due to lack of communication, but can instead be due to lack of a favourable political environment or lack of resources).

In addition to the received wisdom, there are a few issues that are underrepresented in the literature, but which nevertheless seem to be emerging as important themes:<sup>11</sup>

1. *Approach communication as a systemic issue:* The most evident gap in the field is perhaps the failure to see communication as a systemic issue (i.e. linked to economic and political processes in society). Many of the current recommendations offer several possible communication options for individuals and local or project level activities, but have very little to say about how to approach or improve communication at a systemic level. The DFID Research Policy Paper<sup>12</sup> has begun to address this issue.
2. *Improve the conditions under which research is communicated:* The success (or failure) of communication at an individual, local or project level is largely determined by wider systems – including the political environment and socio-economic conditions. The conditions under which research is communicated can have a far more decisive effect on *research uptake* than the actual communication content, channel or strategy. While NGOs and other intermediary organisations have a comparative advantage to communicate at the project and interpersonal levels, the comparative advantage of large CSOs and bilateral agencies may lie at a systemic level.
3. *Facilitate different levels of user engagement in communication of research:* User engagement is the key to taking communication beyond dissemination. It can be approached at three levels, in relation to: (i) the importance of mapping Southern research *demand*; (ii) how to strengthen Southern research *capacity*; and (iii) how to facilitate Southern research *communication*. While the current recommendations from the literature focus on the first two points (Southern research *demand* and Southern research *capacity*), there is relatively little discussion concerning user engagement at the level of Southern research *communication*. The ability to use and shape communication processes are often correlated with the ability to engage in and shape decision-making processes, and is therefore a crucial component of any empowerment process.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Surr, Martin, Andrew Barnett, Alex Duncan, Melanie Speight, David Bradley, Alan Rew and John Toye (2002) *Research for Poverty Reduction: DFID Research Policy Paper*, UK Department for International Development (DFID), London ([www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)).

4. *Invest in communication for double loop learning:* Many of the current recommendations on communication aim to maximise the *direct* impact of research on policy and practice. In the process they frequently lose sight of the more gradual and *indirect* impact that research can have. The current focus is on instrumental change through immediate and identifiable change in policies, and less on conceptual change in the way we see the world and the concepts we use to understand it. The current literature therefore tends to encourage *single loop learning* (i.e. bringing about corrective action within existing guidelines and frameworks), but largely overlooks the important but gradual contribution that research can make for *double loop learning* (i.e. independent and critical debate about the frameworks themselves). Some of these issues are beginning to be addressed through investment in networks, as networks can potentially foster engaged debate on development policy and practice.

For further information and a more comprehensive discussion of these points, please see the full paper.<sup>13</sup>

## 4. Overview of the tools

A communication process has several steps, and at each new step a series of new questions are raised. As one example of the steps that may be involved, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has set up a list of ‘top ten tips’ for researchers (Box 1).

### Box 1: ESRC Top Ten Tips on Research Communication

- Check external perceptions of your centre/programme among potential target audiences before you start. This will help you develop a communications strategy that gives you a distinct and credible voice.
- Begin with a statement of your objectives in communicating the project; don’t simply restate the objectives of the project itself. Make them clear, simple and measurable.
- Be clear on the principles underpinning your strategy. Some may be self-evident, like producing honest, succinct, credible and cost-effective communications. But also think about what you are prepared to do, and not do, as part of your communication strategy.
- Develop some simple messages and model how these might work in different contexts – a press release, a report, a newspaper article, a website page. Remember that you can be succinct without ‘dumbing down’. Make sure your project is branded in line with your communication objectives.
- Be clear about your target audiences and user groups, and prioritise them according to importance and influence relative to your objectives. Don’t just think about the ‘usual suspects’.
- Think about both the actual and preferred channels your target audiences might use and challenge yourself about whether you are planning to use the right ones for maximum impact.
- Include a full list of all the relevant communications activities, developed into a working project plan with deadlines and responsibilities. Keep it flexible but avoid being vague.
- Keep it manageable and don’t underestimate the time involved in communication. Include key deadlines, milestones and review points.
- Estimate the time and money involved. The ESRC recommends that around five per cent of the total funded research budget should be allocated for communication. Ensure value for money by targeting communication effectively: prioritising the audiences and channels and focusing on high impact/low cost activity. Buy in specialist help where necessary.
- Build in some simple evaluation measures at the start so that you’ll know if and how you have succeeded in meeting your communication objectives.

Source: [www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Support/Communications\\_Toolkit/communications\\_strategy/top\\_ten\\_tips/index.aspx](http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Support/Communications_Toolkit/communications_strategy/top_ten_tips/index.aspx).

<sup>13</sup>Hovland, Ingie (2003) ‘Communication of Research for Poverty Reduction: A Literature Review’ *ODI Working Paper 227*, London: ODI ([www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/WP227.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/WP227.pdf)).

The tools included in this booklet have been collected in order to help researchers and practitioners work through a similar series of steps. The tools have therefore been grouped under four broad headings that seem to sum up the core concerns: 'Planning', 'Packaging', 'Targeting', and 'Monitoring'.

### **Planning Tools**

1. Stakeholder Analysis
2. Social Network Analysis
3. Problem Tree Analysis
4. Force Field Analysis
5. National Systems of Innovation (NSI)
6. How to Write a Communications Strategy

### **Packaging Tools**

7. Visioning Scenarios: Show the Future
8. Tell a Story
9. Provide a Solution
10. Use Surprise
11. Be Persuasive

### **Targeting Tools**

12. Writing Policy Papers
13. Building a Community of Practice
14. Lobbying
15. The Gilbert Email Manifesto (GEM)
16. Websites
17. Blogging
18. Media Engagement
19. Radio

### **Monitoring Tools**

20. Most Significant Change (MSC)
21. Outcome Mapping
22. Researcher Checklist
23. CFSC Integrated Model

Although by no means exhaustive or complete, this preliminary set of tools should enable both researchers and practitioners in CSOs to start engaging with the relevant steps of a communication process, and to find links to further information, guidelines and resources at each step.

# Planning Tools

# 1. Stakeholder Analysis

A stakeholder is a person who has something to gain or lose through the outcomes of a planning process or project. In many circles these are called interest groups and they can have a powerful bearing on the outcomes of political processes. It is often beneficial for research projects to identify and analyse the needs and concerns of different stakeholders, particularly when these projects aim to influence policy.

In bridging research and policy, stakeholder analysis can be used to identify all parties engaged in conducting the research, those who make or implement policy, and the intermediaries between them. It can help define a way to engage stakeholders so that the impact of research on policy can be maximised.

It can also be used later in the research, when results are available and the team may want to use the evidence to create policy impact. Then it can be a useful tool to consider who needs to know about the research, what their positions and interests are and how the research should be presented and framed to appeal to them. In this way it becomes an essential tool for assessing different interest groups around a policy issue or debate, and their ability to influence the final outcome.

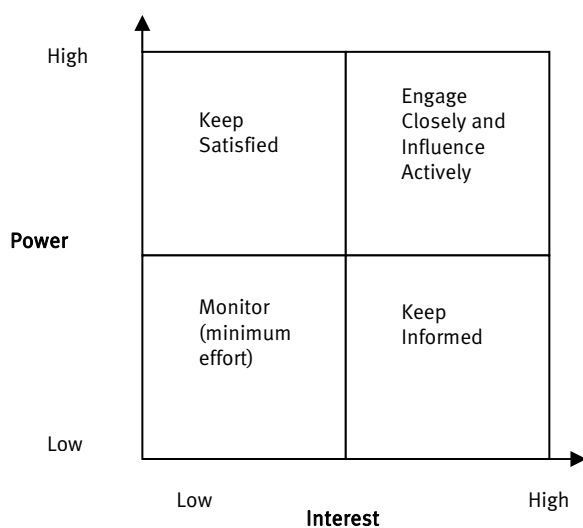
## Detailed outline of the process

The first step is to clarify the research or policy change objective being discussed (Problem Tree Analysis or Objectives Analysis might help with this). Next, identify all the stakeholders or interest groups associated with this objective, project, problem or issue. A small group of about six to eight people, with a varied perspective on the problem, should be enough to create a good brainstorming session. Stakeholders can be organisations, groups, departments, structures, networks or individuals, but the list needs to be pretty exhaustive to ensure nobody is left out. The following grid may help organise the brainstorm, or provide a structure for feedback to plenary if you are working in break-out groups.

**Figure 1: Stakeholder analysis**

Private sector stakeholders	Public sector stakeholders	Civil society stakeholders
Corporations and businesses	Ministers and advisors (executive)	Media
Business associations	Civil servants and departments (bureaucracy)	Churches / religions
Professional bodies	Elected representatives (legislature)	Schools and Universities
Individual business leader	Courts (judiciary)	Social movements and advocacy groups
Financial institutions	Political parties	Trade unions
	Local government / councils	National NGOs
	Military	International NGOs
	Quangos and commissions	
	International bodies (World Bank, UN)	

Then, using the grid in Figure 2, organise the stakeholders in different matrices according to their interest and power. ‘Interest’ measures to what degree they are likely to be affected by the research project or policy change, and what degree of interest or concern they have in or about it. ‘Power’ measures the influence they have over the project or policy, and to what degree they can help achieve, or block, the desired change.

**Figure 2: Stakeholder analysis grid**

Stakeholders with high power, and interests aligned with the project, are the people or organisations it is important to fully engage and bring on board. If trying to create policy change, these people are the targets of any campaign. At the very top of the ‘power’ list will be the ‘decision-makers’, usually members of the government. Beneath these are people whose opinion matters – the ‘opinion leaders’. This creates a pyramid sometimes known as an Influence Map.

Stakeholders with high interest but low power need to be kept informed but, if organised, they may form the basis of an interest group or coalition which can lobby for change. Those with high power but low interest should be kept satisfied and ideally brought around as patrons or supporters for the proposed policy change.

If time and resources permit, further analysis can be carried out which explores in more detail (i) the nature of the power and its position and (ii) the interests that give it that position. This helps the project to better understand why people take certain stands and how they can be bought around. This analysis is developed further in Influence Mapping.<sup>14</sup>

The final step is to develop a strategy for how best to engage different stakeholders in a project, how to ‘frame’ or present the message or information so it is useful to them, and how to maintain a relationship with them. Identify who will make each contact and how, what message they will communicate and how they will follow-up.

### Further resources

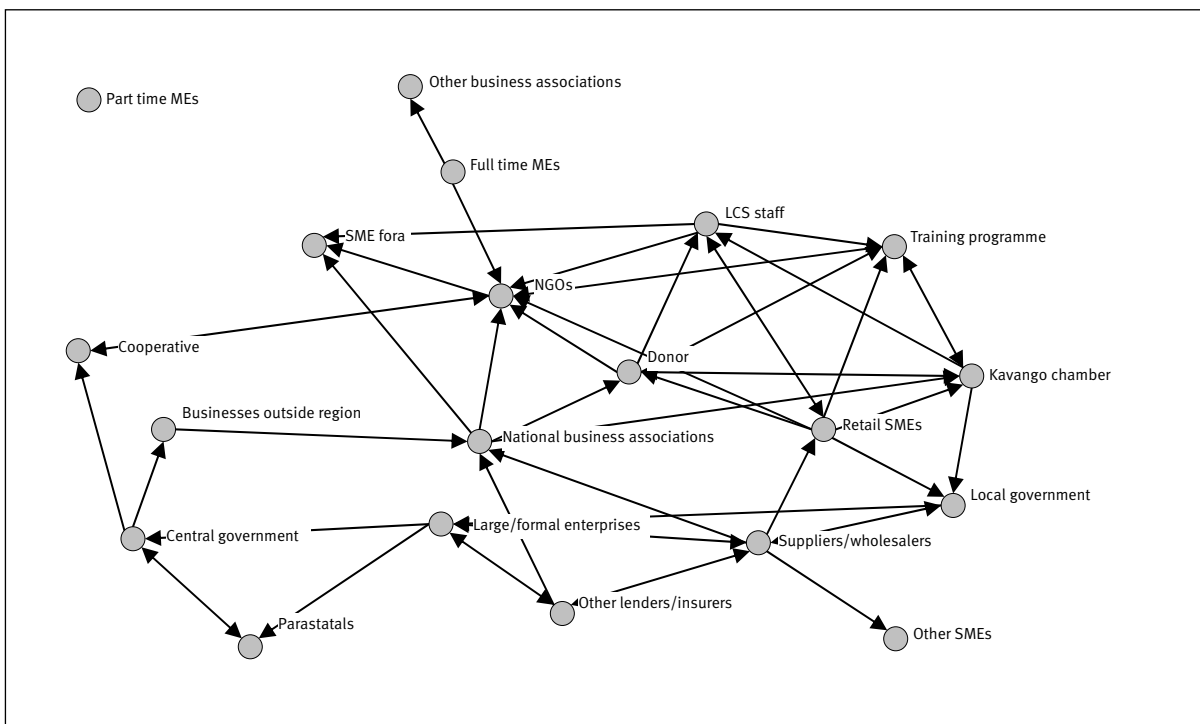
- A good journal article (which includes two case studies from business) can be found at: [www.stsc.hill.af.mil/crosstalk/2000/12/smith.html](http://www.stsc.hill.af.mil/crosstalk/2000/12/smith.html).
- DFID has produced various guidance notes on how to do Stakeholder Analysis which can be found at: [www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/toolsfordevelopment.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/toolsfordevelopment.pdf). For a simple step by step guide, see: [www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/stake.html](http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/stake.html) and for a template see: [www.scenarioplus.org.uk/stakeholders/stakeholders\\_template.doc](http://www.scenarioplus.org.uk/stakeholders/stakeholders_template.doc). For material specifically adapted for campaigning see: resources at: [www.thepressuregroup.com](http://www.thepressuregroup.com).

<sup>14</sup> See Start, Daniel and Ingie Hovland (2004) ‘Tools for Policy Impact: A Handbook for Researchers’, *RAPID Toolkit*, London: ODI ([www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/Tools\\_handbook\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/Tools_handbook_final_web.pdf)).

## 2. Social Network Analysis

A network is a simple concept. It consists of two things: nodes and links between those nodes. In social network analysis the nodes of concern are people, groups and organisations. In other areas of network analysis the nodes of concern may be pages in the World Wide Web, different species in an ecosystem or different compounds in a cell. In social network analysis links may be social contacts, exchanges of information, political influence, money, joint membership in an organisation, joint participation in specific events or many other aspects of human relationships. The defining feature of social network analysis is the focus on the structure of relationships.

**Figure 3: Social network analysis**



Source: Biggs and Matsuert (1998) in Rick Davies (2003)

It has been argued for some time that organisations are embedded in networks of larger social processes, which they influence, and which also influence them (Granovetter, 1985; 1992). Recognising this can help us bridge links between different levels of analyses, relating to different types of organisational entities within development aid: projects, country programmes, and government policies. Within the aid agencies themselves the structuring of relationships between staff is another set of relationship choices with direct consequences for how local projects and national policies relate to each other or not. Structure can link strategies at different levels, or not (Davies, 2003).

### Further resources

- Davies, Rick (2003) *Network Perspectives in the Evaluation of Development Interventions: More Than a Metaphor*, see: [www.mande.co.uk/docs/nape.pdf](http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/nape.pdf).
- The International Network of SNA, with a comprehensive list of resources, see: [www.ire.org/sna](http://www.ire.org/sna).



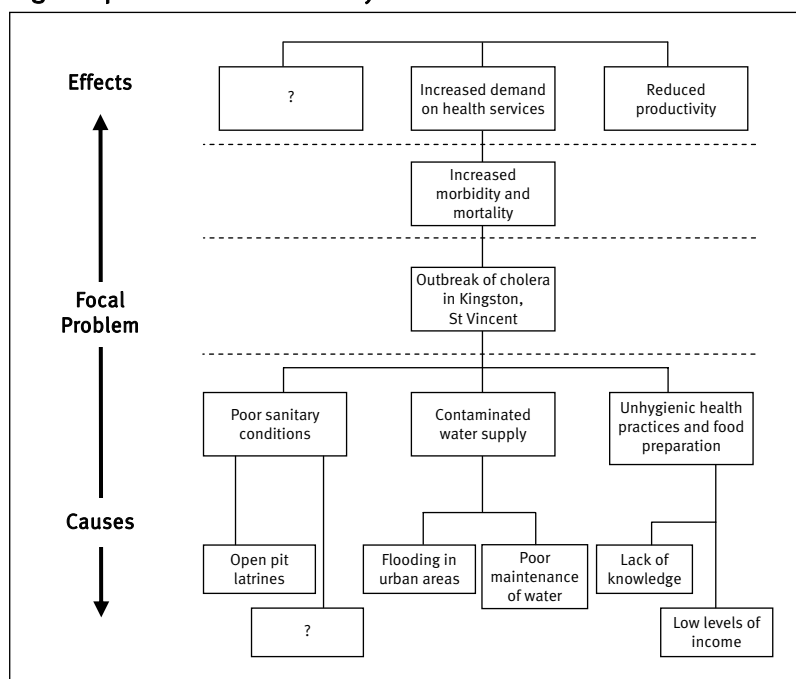
- Ramalingam, Ben (2005) 'Tools for Knowledge and Learning', *RAPID Toolkit*, London: ODI, see: [www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM\\_toolkit\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM_toolkit_web.pdf). (Especially for further resources on networks and on the different connecting roles that people can play)
- Kincaid, Larry (2000) 'Social networks, ideation, and contraceptive behaviour in Bangladesh: a longitudinal analysis', *Social Science & Medicine* 50(2): 215-31. (On the use of a social network approach to family planning communication in Bangladesh)
- Perkin, Emily and Julius Court (2005) 'Networks and Policy Processes in International Development: A Literature Review' *ODI Working Paper 252*, see: [www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/WP252.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/WP252.pdf).
- Castells, Manuel (2004) 'Why networks matter', published as an afterword to the recent Demos collection of essays: McCarthy et al. (2004) *Network Logic: Who governs in an interconnected world?*
- Boonyabanha, Somsook (1999) *Citizen Networks to Address Urban Poverty Experiences of Urban Community Development Office*, Thailand UCDO, Asian Coalition for Housing Rights.

### 3. Problem Tree Analysis

Problem tree analysis is central to many forms of project planning and is well developed among development agencies. Problem tree analysis (also called Situational analysis or just Problem analysis) helps to find solutions by mapping out the anatomy of cause and effect around an issue in a similar way to a Mind map, but with more structure. This brings several advantages:

- The problem can be broken down into manageable and definable chunks. This enables a clearer prioritisation of factors and helps focus objectives;
- There is more understanding of the problem and its often interconnected and even contradictory causes. This is often the first step in finding win-win solutions;
- It identifies the constituent issues and arguments, and can help establish who and what the political actors and processes are at each stage;
- It can help establish whether further information, evidence or resources are needed to make a strong case, or build a convincing solution;
- Present issues – rather than apparent, future or past issues – are dealt with and identified;
- The process of analysis often helps build a shared sense of understanding, purpose and action.

Figure 4: Problem tree analysis



Problem tree analysis is best carried out in a small focus group of about six to eight people using flip chart paper or an overhead transparency. It is important that factors can be added as the conversation progresses. The first step is to discuss and agree the problem or issue to be analysed. Do not worry if it seems like a broad topic because the problem tree will help break it down. The problem or issue is written in the centre of the flip chart and becomes the ‘trunk’ of the tree. This becomes the ‘focal problem’. The wording does not need to be exact as the roots and branches will further define it, but it should describe an actual issue that everyone feels passionately about.

Next, the group identify the causes of the focal problem – these become the roots – and then identify the consequences, which become the branches. These causes and consequences can be created on

post-it notes or cards, perhaps individually or in pairs, so that they can be arranged in a cause-and-effect logic.

The heart of the exercise is the discussion, debate and dialogue that is generated as factors are arranged and re-arranged, often forming sub-dividing roots and branches (like a Mind map). Take time to allow people to explain their feelings and reasoning, and record related ideas and points that come up on separate flip chart paper under titles such as solutions, concerns and decisions.

Discussion questions might include:

- Does this represent the reality? Are the economic, political and socio-cultural dimensions to the problem considered?
- Which causes and consequences are getting better, which are getting worse and which are staying the same?
- What are the most serious consequences? Which are of most concern? What criteria are important to us in thinking about a way forward?
- Which causes are easiest / most difficult to address? What possible solutions or options might there be? Where could a policy change help address a cause or consequence, or create a solution?
- What decisions have we made, and what actions have we agreed?

The Problem tree is closely linked to the Objectives tree, another key tool in the project planner's repertoire, and well used by development agencies. The Problem tree can be converted into an objectives tree by rephrasing each of the problems into positive desirable outcomes – as if the problem had already been treated. In this way, root causes and consequences are turned into root solutions, and key project or influencing entry points are quickly established. These objectives may well be worded as objectives for change. These can then feed into a Force field analysis which provides a useful next step.

## A good example

As part of designing an HIV/AIDS activity in Kenya, a DFID design team needed to have a deeper understanding of various issues and constraints related to the epidemic. Before moving to a large log frame workshop the team decided to conduct focus group interviews with potential target groups and service providers. Through the focus groups the team gained a much deeper understanding of HIV/AIDS-related problems, constraints and opportunities. At the same time, participants in the groups learned much about common problems they themselves were facing and their possible solutions. Counselling and testing groups discovered they all faced a critical issue about how to protect the confidentiality of HIV-positive clients. Through the discussion they were able to exchange ideas of how to achieve this. Some had a policy focus and helped understand where changes in government practise and legislation could help. These issues were brought into the log frame workshop, where they were integrated in the design through an activity output dealing with improved counselling and testing services.

## Further resources

- There are many references to Problem analysis in toolkits, particularly from development agencies. These include a detailed description in DFID's Tools for Development (from which the diagram and example are taken) and CERTI's (Complex Emergency Response and Transition Initiative) crisis and transition toolkit:
  - [www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/toolsfordevelopment.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/toolsfordevelopment.pdf)
  - [www.certi.org/publications/Manuals/rap-16-section3.htm](http://www.certi.org/publications/Manuals/rap-16-section3.htm)

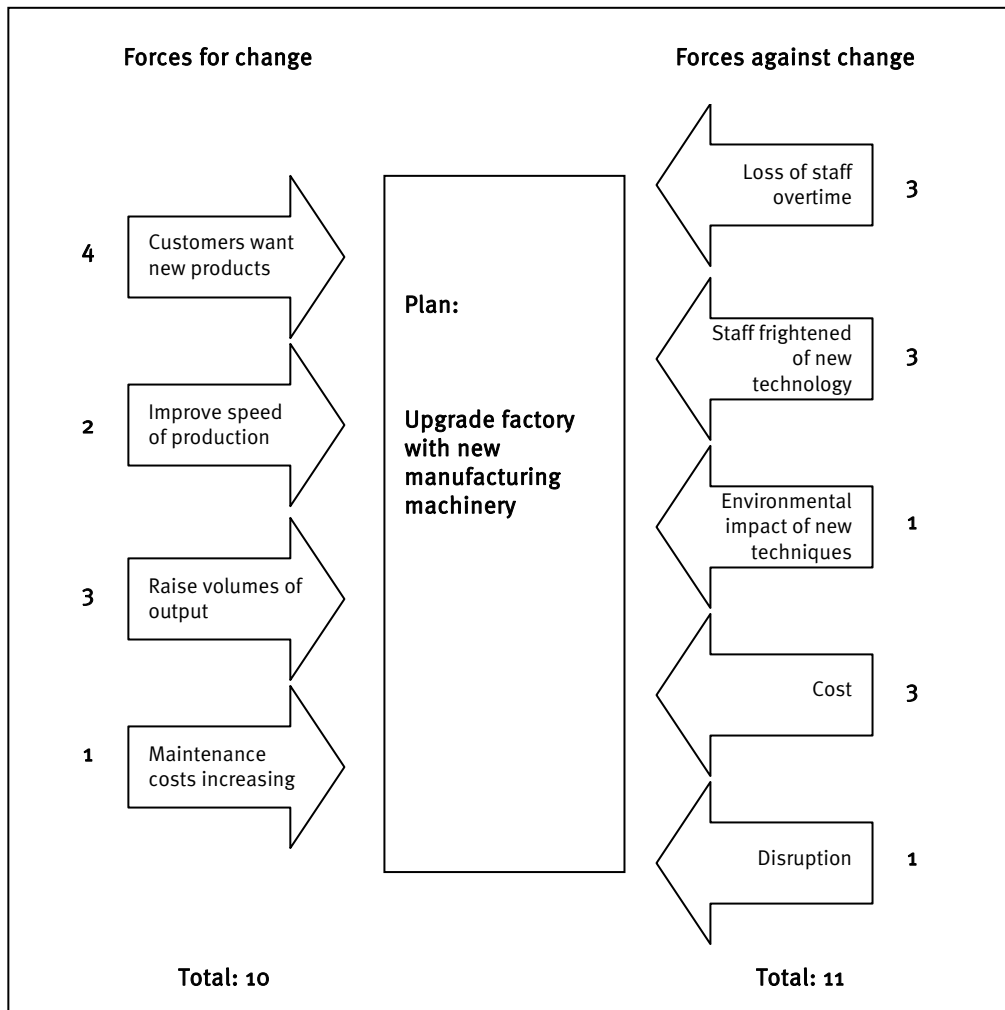
## 4. Force Field Analysis

Force Field Analysis was developed by Lewin (1951) and is widely used to inform decision-making, particularly in planning and implementing change management programmes in organisations. It is a powerful method for gaining a comprehensive overview of the different forces acting on a potential policy issue, and for assessing their source and strength.

### Detailed outline of the process

Force Field Analysis is best carried out in small group of about six to eight people using flip chart paper or overhead transparencies so that everyone can see what is going on. The first step is to agree the area of change to be discussed. This might be written as a desired policy goal or objective. All the forces in support of the change are then listed in a column to the left (driving the change forward) while all forces working against the change are listed in a column to the right (holding it back). The driving and restraining forces should be sorted around common themes and should then be scored according to their 'magnitude', ranging from one (weak) to five (strong). The score may well not balance on either side. The resulting table might look like Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Force field analysis example



Source: Mind Tool, see: [www.psywww.com/mtsite/forcefld.html](http://www.psywww.com/mtsite/forcefld.html)

Throughout the process rich discussion, debate and dialogue should emerge. This is an important part of the exercise and key issues should be allowed time. Findings and ideas may well come up to do with concerns, problems, symptoms and solutions. It is useful to record these and review where there is a consensus on an action or a way forward. In policy influencing the aim is to find ways to reduce the restraining forces and to capitalise on the driving forces.

Force Field Analysis is natural follow-on from Problem Tree Analysis which can often help to identify objectives for policy change. A useful next step on from Force Field Analysis is Stakeholder Analysis in which the specific stakeholders for and against a change are identified, together with their power, influence and interests.

## Further resources

- The case study above comes from PLA Notes (1999) Issue 36, pp.17-23. IIED, London, at: [www.worldbank.org/participation/PRSP/plna/plan\\_03604.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/participation/PRSP/plna/plan_03604.pdf).
- Another case details the use of Force Field Analysis in a school situation to assess the potential to change from teacher-centered methods of working to greater pupil participation in planning. See: [www.crossroad.to/Quotes/brainwashing/force-field.htm](http://www.crossroad.to/Quotes/brainwashing/force-field.htm).
- For original literature of Force Field Analysis see Lewin, K. (1951) *Field Theory in Social Science*, New York: Harper and Row.
- Simple step-by-step guides to carrying out Force Field Analysis are available at: [www.mindtools.com/forcefld.html](http://www.mindtools.com/forcefld.html) for examples of the use of force field analysis in management, and at: [www.psywww.com/mtsite/forcefld.html](http://www.psywww.com/mtsite/forcefld.html) for examples of the use of force field analysis in psychology. For a brief overview see: [www.mycoted.com/creativity/techniques/forcefieldanal.php](http://www.mycoted.com/creativity/techniques/forcefieldanal.php). Examples of the application of force field analysis in change management, see: [www.accel-team.com/techniques/force\\_field\\_analysis.html](http://www.accel-team.com/techniques/force_field_analysis.html), and in health (MSH and UNICEF), see: <http://erc.msh.org/quality/example/example5.cfm>.
- For computer software to conduct Force Field Analysis see: [www.skymark.com/resources/tools/force\\_field\\_diagram.asp](http://www.skymark.com/resources/tools/force_field_diagram.asp).

## 5. National Systems of Innovation (NSI)

The impact that research can have on any given target group is determined by many other factors besides investment in the research itself. Many of these factors are outside the control of researchers. They include:

- the level of education of the target group
- the technology available to the target group
- the political voice of the target group
- the socio-economic options available to the target group
- the broader policy context that the target group has to live within

Factors such as these are determined by National Systems of Innovation (NSI). NSI refers to all those institutions and institutional relationships that make it possible to produce and use innovation: educational policy; higher education investment; research institutes; research infrastructure; technological infrastructure; technological capacity; government policy; promotion of strategic industries; etc.

This has a decisive impact on communication of research. In sum, it means that the communication of research will only have an impact if the surrounding NSI is *enabling*. If, on the other hand, the surrounding NSI are *disabling*, the communication of research is *not* likely to have any significant impact, however well the communication itself is carried out.

### Outline of questions

NSI analysis points out that communication of research is only one element within a wider system. In order to map out this system, and to determine the potential impact of communication activities, the following questions can be asked:

- What *uptake mechanisms* are available to the target group?
- What *capacity* does the target group have to make use of the research once it has been communicated?
- Which *enabling institutions* already exist? (And can we use them?)
- What *other factors* need to be in place here for communication to have an impact?

In sum: *Impact = Communication + What?*

### Further resources

- Barnett, Andrew (2005) 'Reducing poverty needs an 'innovation system' approach', see: [www.scidev.net/dossiers/index.cfm?fuseaction=dossierReadItem&type=3&itemid=374&language=1&dossier=13](http://www.scidev.net/dossiers/index.cfm?fuseaction=dossierReadItem&type=3&itemid=374&language=1&dossier=13).
- Surr, Martin et al. (2002) 'Research for Poverty Reduction' *DFID Research Policy Paper*, London: UK Department for International Development.

## 6. How to Write a Communications Strategy

Drawing up a communications strategy is an art, not a science and there are lots of different ways of approaching the task. The advice provided below is only a guide. Whether your communications strategy is designed for a specific project or for the same period as your organisational strategy, it should establish the following:

- Objectives
- Audiences
- Messages
- Tools and activities
- Resources
- Timescales
- Evaluation and amendment

### Objectives

Your objectives are the key to the success of your communications strategy. They should ensure that your communications strategy is organisationally driven rather than communications driven. Your communications activity is not an end in itself but should serve and hence be aligned with your organisational objectives. Ask yourself what you can do within communications to help your organisation achieve its core objectives.

Aligning your communications and organisational objectives will also help to reinforce the importance and relevance of communications and thereby make a convincing case for the proper resourcing of communications activity within your organisation.

### Audiences

You should identify those audiences with whom you need to communicate to achieve your organisational objectives. The best audiences to target in order to achieve an objective may not always be the most obvious ones, and targeting audiences such as the media may not always help achieve your objectives. Everyone would like a higher media and political profile, yet activities aiming towards this may ultimately be self-serving and only communications driven, with no wider impact. They can even have a negative effect if you dedicate resources towards this that would otherwise be put towards communicating with key stakeholders.

### Messages

Strategic targeting and consistency are key to your organisation's messages. Create a comprehensive case covering all the key messages, and emphasise the different elements of the case for different audiences.

To maximise impact you should summarise the case in three key points which can be constantly repeated. Remember that communications is all about storytelling: use interesting narrative, human interest stories and arresting imagery.

## **Tools and activities**

Identify the tools and activities that are most appropriate to communicating the key messages to the audiences. These will be suggested by your audiences, messages, or a combination of the two. For example, an annual report is a useful tool in corporate communications whereas an email newsletter lends itself well to internal communications. Ensure that you tailor your tools and activities to the level of time and human and financial resources available.

## **Resources and timescales**

The key rules to observe are always to deliver what you promise and never over promise. Use your resources and timescales to set legitimate levels of expectations and outline the case for more dedicated resources.

## **Evaluation and amendment**

Consider performing a communications audit to assess the effectiveness of your strategy with both your internal and external audiences. You should use open questions with appropriate prompts and benchmarks and, if possible, get someone independent to do the work. Consider and discuss the results carefully and use them to amend your strategy.

Example audiences to consider are your staff, funders, key political targets and media. Questions you should consider asking are:

- What do you read/see/hear?
- What works/doesn't work?
- What do you want to see more of?
- What information do you need that you are not currently supplied with?
- How often do you want us to communicate with you?

While drawing up your strategy, you should involve your team, and on a smaller scale, the entire organisation. Feed the communications strategy into the organisational strategy to ensure maximum alignment and efficiency.

## **Source**

- The Media Trust, see: [www.mediatrust.org/online\\_guides/comms\\_strat.html](http://www.mediatrust.org/online_guides/comms_strat.html).

## **Further resources**

- The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) 'How to write a communications strategy', available at: [www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Support/Communications%5FToolkit/communications%5Fstrategy/](http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Support/Communications%5FToolkit/communications%5Fstrategy/).



## Packaging Tools

## 7. Visioning Scenarios: Show the Future

Scenario testing is a group activity. But the basic premise can also be used more widely in all kinds of communication, whether in a policy paper (e.g. outline three possible future scenarios in the introduction), a workshop presentation, or an email debate. Generally, scenario testing would deliver three scenarios: a positive (or optimistic), negative (or pessimistic), and neutral (or middle of the road) scenario.

By actively using ‘scenarios’ in all kinds of communication activities, several concerns and outcomes can be communicated at the same time. You are able to:

- Identify general, broad, driving forces, which are applicable to all scenarios;
- Identify a variety of *plausible* trends within each issue or trend (trends that vary depending on your assumptions so you get positive and negative perspectives);
- Combine the trends so you get a series of scenarios (for example, mostly positive trends identified in relation to an issue would give a positive scenario).

‘Scenario testing’s greatest use is in developing an understanding of the situation, rather than trying to predict the future’ (Caldwell, 2001).

Scenarios are a way of developing alternative futures based on different combinations of assumptions, facts and trends, and areas where more understanding is needed for your particular scenario project. They are called ‘scenarios’ because they are like ‘scenes’ in the theatre – a series of differing views or presentations on the same general topic. Once you see several scenarios at the same time, you better understand your options or possibilities (seminar on Futures Techniques, <http://ag.arizona.edu/futures/tou/tut2-buildscenarios.html>).

### Method

- Invite participants who have knowledge of, or are affected by, the proposal or issue of interest.
- Invite participants to identify the underlying paradigms or unwritten laws of change; trends or driving forces and collect into general categories (economy, socio/political, etc.); and wildcards or uncertainties.
- Consider how these might affect a situation, either singly or in combination, using these steps:
  - review the big picture
  - review general approaches to future studies
  - identify what you know and what you don’t know
  - select possible paradigm shifts and use them as an overall guide
  - cluster trends and see which driving forces are most relevant to your scenario
- Create alternative scenarios (similar to alternate scenes in a play) by mixing wildcards with trends and driving forces; keep the number of scenarios small (four is ideal because it avoids the ‘either/or’ choice of two, and the good/bad/medium choice of three).
- Write a brief report that states assumptions and future framework; provides observations and conclusions; gives a range of possibilities; and focuses on the next steps coming out of this study. Each scenario should be about one page.

## Source

- [www.coastal.crc.org.au/toolbox/index.asp](http://www.coastal.crc.org.au/toolbox/index.asp)

## Further resources on scenarios

- Caldwell, R. (2001) 'Tutorial 2: Building Scenarios', Arizona University, <http://ag.arizona.edu/futures/tou/tut2-buildscenarios.html>.
- *Futures Research Quarterly*, Summer 2001, 17 (2). Issue devoted to scenario building, Available from World Future Society.
- US Department. of Transportation (2001) Land Use/Transportation Scenario Testing: A Tool for the 1990s, <http://tmip.fhwa.dot.gov/clearinghouse/docs/landuse/luts/intro.stm>.

## Visioning

'Visioning' is similar to scenario planning. Visioning is a collective exercise, but can also be adapted and used in various other communication activities. The main objective is to make the problem and solution *visual*. It follows the age-old communication advice: show, don't tell.

Collective visioning exercises, carried out in a group, are used to define and help achieve a desirable future. Visioning exercises are regularly used in urban and strategic planning and allow participants to create images that can help to guide change in the city. The outcome of a visioning exercise is a long term plan, generally with a 20 to 30 year horizon. Visioning exercises also provide a frame for a strategy for the achievement of the vision. Alternatively, some visioning tools may be used to promote thought and encourage discussion of future land use and planning options, without the need to create a future orientated document.

## Method

In a typical visioning exercise a facilitator asks participants to close their eyes and imagine they are walking along their shoreline as they would like to see it in 15 years. What do they see? What do the buildings look like? Where do people gather? How do they make decisions? What are they eating? Where are they working? How are they travelling? What is happening on the street? Where is the centre of the neighbourhood? How does green space and water fit into the picture? What do you see when you walk around after dark?

People record their visions in written or pictorial form: in diagrams, sketches, models, photographic montages, and in written briefs. Sometimes a professional illustrator helps turn mental images into drawings of the city that people can extend and modify (see: [www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/2\\_16\\_visioning.html](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/2_16_visioning.html)). Invite the group to comment on these choices. Invite the participants to discuss what was easy and what was difficult about the process, what they learned, and how they might use the game in the future.

## Uses/strengths

- Use when integration between issues is required.
- Use when a wide variety of ideas should be heard.
- Use when a range of potential solutions are needed.
- Visioning encourages participation for developing a long-range plan.

- Visioning is an integrated approach to policymaking. With overall goals in view, it helps avoid piecemeal and reactionary approaches to addressing problems. Visioning uses participation as a source of ideas in the establishment of long-range policy. It draws upon deeply-held feelings about overall directions of public agencies to solicit opinions about the future.
- When completed, visioning presents a democratically-derived consensus.
- When using games such as 'Wheel of Coastal Fortune' as a visioning tool, this offers the following advantages:
  - Can access sections of the population who are typically disempowered in traditional consultative processes (Luckie, 1995).
  - Can be used to assess willingness to pay to preserve specific environmental attributes or willingness to accept the loss of these attributes.
  - Can involve a broad range of participants (in demographic terms).

### Special considerations/weaknesses

- Organisation of the visioning exercise can be costly.
- Vision can be difficult to transfer into strategy and policy.

### Source

- [www.coastal.crc.org.au/toolbox/index.asp](http://www.coastal.crc.org.au/toolbox/index.asp)

### Further resources on visioning

- 'Participation and Consultation Methods', Canadian Centre for Analysis of Regionalization and Health, see: [www.regionalization.org/PPfirstpage.html](http://www.regionalization.org/PPfirstpage.html).
- Ames, Steven C. (1989) *Charting a Course for Corvallis: A Case Study of Community Visioning in Oregon*, Gresham, Oregon: American Planning Association (Oregon Chapter), Oregon Visions Project, May.
- Ames, Steven C. (1993) *The Agency Visioning Handbook: Developing A Vision for the Future of Public Agencies, A Hands-on Guide for Planners and Facilitators in State and Federal Natural Resource Agencies*. Arlington, Virginia: US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service Cointelligence Institute (2002) 'A Toolbox of processes for community work', see: [www.co-intelligence.org/CIPol\\_CommunityProcesses.html](http://www.co-intelligence.org/CIPol_CommunityProcesses.html).
- 'Focusing on Citizens: A Guide to Approaches and Methods', see: [www.improvementservice.org.uk/component/option,com\\_docman/task,doc\\_download/Itemid,230/gid,122/](http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/component/option,com_docman/task,doc_download/Itemid,230/gid,122/)
- New Economics Foundation and UK Participation Network (1998) 'Participation Works: 21 Techniques', see: [www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)
- US Department of Transportation (1996) Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making, see: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/pittd/vision.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reports/pittd/vision.htm).
- US Environmental Protection Agency (2002) 'Green Communities Where Do We Want To Be?', see: [www.epa.gov/greenkit/intro3.htm](http://www.epa.gov/greenkit/intro3.htm).
- Vancouver Citizens Committee and Charles Dobson, 'The Citizens Handbook – Kitchen table discussion', see: [www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook).

## 8. Tell a Story

Chapman and Fisher (1999) succinctly highlight the importance of *stories* for the communication of policy ideas: ‘Most campaigns are based on an oral history which contains a range of multiple and conflicting perspectives. An effective campaign is based on stories and the extent to which these are accepted by different parties’ (p.155).

### Using narratives and story to help effect transition

A compelling story can provide the ideal vehicle for ideas, learning and good practice; simple, familiar and immediately understandable, it can also accommodate many points of view, strong emotion and difficult truths. Storytelling can be used to:

- identify and exchange learning episodes;
- explore values and inspire people towards the possibility of change;
- enrich quantitative information with qualitative evidence, illustrations and real examples;
- identify connections and create shared purpose; and
- improve the effectiveness of strategic decisions by creating a better loop of understanding between strategy and implementation (source: [www.sparknow.net](http://www.sparknow.net)).

*Good stories* are generally those that are interesting, unusual, provocative, serious, controversial, surprising, intriguing, or inspiring in some way. A few entry points into good stories include the following:

- Include a ‘human interest’ element, i.e. clearly describe the people who will be affected by the issue or cause you are covering.
- Tell the big story from the point of view (‘through the eyes of’) someone who is directly involved.
- Sometimes the most powerful effect is achieved by simply telling the story of one individual.
- Achieve a balance between words from human beings and statements from organisations.
- Tell the story of a successful intervention.
- Tell the story of an unsuccessful intervention.

A *springboard story* is one that enables a leap in understanding by the audience so as to grasp how an organisation or community or complex system may change. A springboard story has an impact not so much through transferring large amounts of information, but through catalysing understanding. It enables listeners to visualise from a story in one context what is involved in a large-scale transformation in an analogous context. The idea of a springboard story is explained in Steve Denning’s book ‘The Springboard: How Storytelling Ignites Action in Knowledge-Era Organizations’. This book describes in detail how a springboard story works, as well as how to craft, frame and perform a springboard story. The book describes why springboard stories work well with particular audiences – and why they don’t work with others – and the principles that can help us choose stories that will work with audiences to achieve a particular effect. It also explains the characteristics of springboard stories – they are told from the perspective of a single protagonist who was in a predicament that is prototypical of the organisation’s business. The predicament of the explicit story is familiar to the particular audience, and indeed, it is the very predicament that the change proposal is meant to solve. The stories have a degree of strangeness or incongruity for the listeners, so that it captures their attention and stimulates their imaginations (source: [www.stevedenning.com](http://www.stevedenning.com)).

### Box 2: Contending Stories: Narrative in Social Movements

by Francesca Polleta (*The Drum Beat*, Issue 307, 11 July 2005)

Polleta suggests that the narrative is just one of the many forms of social movement talk, and she begins by attempting to discover its nature and role. She suggests that storytelling is governed by social rules that may in fact make it likely to contribute to the reproduction of dominant understandings. Narratives affect movement development in several ways. The first is their role in fledgling movements, whose emergence is often described as a process whereby protest ‘wells up’, ‘explodes’ or ‘bursts’ forth from a previously unaware and unprepared grassroots populace. This suggests spontaneity, which is not always the case, but this appearance of spontaneity may have strategic value. Narratives are also important in attempting to describe the origins of a social movement. When does protest begin? When does one become an ‘activist’? These questions are unanswerable in an objective manner. When organisations and movements encounter setbacks, it is often narrative that is used to explain defeat in ways that might put a more positive perspective on the tide of events.

Source: [www.comminit.com/evaluations/eval2005/evaluations-69.html](http://www.comminit.com/evaluations/eval2005/evaluations-69.html)

### A good example

Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) (Heather Briggs, in email discussion leading up to the World Congress on Communication for Development, WCCD, in March 2006 in Rome.)

Documenting the stories of what works in particular contexts, and why, may be one of the most important contributions that communicators can make for development. My team tries to do that. One recent example from a project we've supported in the Philippines, which uses community-based participative processes to spread a particular approach to caring for the land through use of vegetative strips and tree plantings between crops: The team was undertaking standard M&E activities as part of their action research, but recognised they were not capturing all the richness to help guide future scaling up and out activities. We contracted a science communicator to work with the team's local facilitators to train them in interview techniques and develop an instrument to gather the stories of project participants at all levels – farmers, community leaders, nursery owners, researchers, regional policymakers, etc. The resulting stories have been woven into a book on experiences of land care in the Philippines (see: [www.aciar.gov.au/web.nsf/doc/ACIA-66CW4P](http://www.aciar.gov.au/web.nsf/doc/ACIA-66CW4P)). The process of gathering the stories, and their availability to those continuing the work, have and will continue to influence project outcomes. The published output will contribute to the impact of the project.

### Further resources

- Ramalingam, Ben (2005) ‘Tools for Knowledge and Learning’, *RAPID Toolkit*, London: ODI, see: [www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM\\_toolkit\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM_toolkit_web.pdf). Especially for further resources on types of narratives and a useful template.
- Chapman, J. and T. Fisher (1999) *Effective Campaigning*, London: NEF.
- Steve Denning, The website for business and organizational storytelling, see: [www.stevedenning.com](http://www.stevedenning.com).
- Denning, Steve (2000) *The Springboard: How Storytelling Ignites Action in Knowledge-Era Organizations*, Butterworth Heinemann, see: [www.stevedenning.com/springboard.htm](http://www.stevedenning.com/springboard.htm).
- Sparknow, see: [www.sparknow.net](http://www.sparknow.net).
- Sparknow (2004) ‘Sous l’arbre à palabre, or Under the palaver tree: The story of an ongoing partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC)’, [http://spark.spanner.org/ul/S/SDC\\_sous\\_l\\_arbre\\_a\\_palabre.pdf](http://spark.spanner.org/ul/S/SDC_sous_l_arbre_a_palabre.pdf).
- Colton, Stephanie and Victoria Ward with contributions from Claudine Arnold, Paul Corney and Carol Russell (2004) ‘Telling Tales: Oral Storytelling as an Effective Way to Capitalise Knowledge Assets’, [http://spark.spanner.org/ul/t/ta\\_SPARKPRESS\\_Folders\\_ASSETS\\_Current\\_2003\\_04\\_Telling\\_Tales\\_deco3.pdf](http://spark.spanner.org/ul/t/ta_SPARKPRESS_Folders_ASSETS_Current_2003_04_Telling_Tales_deco3.pdf).

## 9. Provide a Solution

When communicating research for any specific purpose, it is crucial to make clear: (i) what the *problem* is; (ii) what the possible *solutions* are; and (iii) which one you would *recommend*.

### Constructing the problem description

- *Make a claim, then support it*: This is the way legal defence arguments are built up. It is the most effective way to build an argument if you are trying to convince someone.
- *Use coherent links*: One of the most basic features of good argumentation is coherence, which involves providing transparent links between each part of the argument so that a clear picture of the overall argument emerges. This can be achieved, for example, through:
  - clear, descriptive section titles and numbering
  - use the opening sentence of each section to drive the argument
  - use the first (or last) sentence of each paragraph to make the most important point
  - make effective use of paragraphing (for those readers who only skim)
  - maintain coherence within the text

### Possible solutions: policy options

The policy options element:

- outlines, evaluates and compares the possible policy alternatives;
- provides a convincing argument for the preferred policy alternative;
- builds a clear and coherent link to the conclusions and recommendations element of the policy paper.

The argument for your preferred policy option must be the foundation and justification for your final recommendations. Therefore, it must be clearly linked to the recommendations section in the conclusion of the paper.

In the policy options element, the policy adviser needs to show his or her expertise and take the lead in the argument to strongly advocate for his or her chosen option. Remembering that policy science should be problem-oriented and targeted, this is the opportunity for you to prove that yours is a practical solution to the outlined problem, and therefore a valuable contribution to the policy debate and the policy community in general.

### Conclusion and recommendations

This final major element brings the policy paper to an end by synthesising the major findings of the research and outlining the writer's suggested course of action. Hence, the purpose of the policy paper as a decision-making tool and call to action is ultimately fulfilled in this element. The fact that the conclusion and recommendations is the final major part of the paper also means that it is responsible for leaving a lasting impression of the paper on the reader.

Many readers read this section together with the introduction and abstract or executive summary as an initial stage before reading the detailed main body of the paper. The conclusion and recommendations element, therefore, plays a vital role in helping these readers to get a clear overview of the whole paper. Some readers are also particularly interested in the policy recommendations proposed in the paper and may start their reading by first looking at the recommendations and then at the rest of the paper.

*Checklist for the conclusion and recommendations:*

- Have you synthesised only the major findings of the study?
- Are your recommendations logically divided into separate measures and clearly presented?
- Are all recommendations effectively written?
- Does the conclusion provide a sense of completeness to the paper?

## Source

- Young, Eóin and Lisa Quinn (2002) 'Writing Effective Public Policy Papers: A Guide To Policy Advisers in Central and Eastern Europe', *LGI Documents*, [http://lgi.osi.hu/publications\\_datasheet.php?id=112](http://lgi.osi.hu/publications_datasheet.php?id=112)

## Further resources

- 'Writing a Policy Memo', [http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/acbrooks/Pages/Courses/Documents/NP\\_Econ/Policy%20memo%20instructions%20NP%20mgmt.pdf](http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/acbrooks/Pages/Courses/Documents/NP_Econ/Policy%20memo%20instructions%20NP%20mgmt.pdf).
- Musso, Juliet, Robert Biller and Robert Myrtle (2000) 'Tradecraft: Professional Writing as Problem Solving', *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 19(4):635-646.
- 'Guidelines for Writing a Policy Brief', <http://jhunix.hcf.jhu.edu/~ktsai/policybrief.html>.
- 'Writing criteria for policy memos' (adapted from Steve Frank), see: [www.pubpol.duke.edu/centers/dewitt/course/memoguide.html](http://www.pubpol.duke.edu/centers/dewitt/course/memoguide.html).
- 'Internal Procedures and Effective Brief Writing in the fifth Circuit', see: [www.cooley.com/files/tbl\\_s5SiteRepository/FileUpload21/302/A-Ploeger-%20Internal%20Procedures%20and%20Effective%20Briefwriting%20in%20the%20Fifth%20Circuit.pdf](http://www.cooley.com/files/tbl_s5SiteRepository/FileUpload21/302/A-Ploeger-%20Internal%20Procedures%20and%20Effective%20Briefwriting%20in%20the%20Fifth%20Circuit.pdf)
- Eugene Bardach (1997) *The Eight Step Path to Policy Analysis*, Berkeley Academic Press.



## 10. Use Surprise

Communication works through getting someone's *attention* and then holding it. There are several ways to provoke their interest. Some techniques are especially frequently used by social scientists (summed up by Davis, 1971 and Weick, 1979) and they all rely on using an element of *surprise*.

### Surprise = an attack on assumptions

'All interesting theories share the quality that they constitute an attack on assumptions taken for granted by an audience. People find non intersecting those propositions that affirm their assumption ground (that's obvious), that do not speak to their assumption ground (that's irrelevant), or that deny their assumption ground (that's absurd).' (Davis, 1971:331).

Davis suggests 12 categories into which interesting propositions can be sorted, including the following:

- *Generalisation*: If a person assumes that a phenomenon is local and it turns out to be general, or vice versa, then interest is provoked, e.g. Freud asserts that sexual behaviour is not confined to adults, it is also found in children.
- *Organisation*: Interest will develop when people assume that a phenomenon is disorganised or unstructured and then discover that it is really organised, or vice versa, e.g. if it can be shown that there is a lack of structure in government decision-making where structure was presumed to exist.
- *Causation*: What seems to be the independent variable in a causal relationship turns out to be the dependent variable, e.g. participative management styles don't increase productivity, the presence of productivity leads managers to adopt more participative management styles.
- *Opposition*: What seem to be opposite phenomena are in reality similar, or vice versa, e.g. people who join opposing social movements are in fact joining them for similar reasons.
- *Co-variation*: What is assumed to be a positive co-variation between phenomena is in reality a negative co-variation, and vice versa, e.g. the assumption that lower-income people are charged less for goods and services turns out to be wrong, and in fact they pay more.

In sum, people seem to find a proposition interesting not because it tells them some truth they did not already know, but because it tells them some truth they thought they already knew was wrong.

### Source

- Weick, Karl (1979) *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, 2nd ed, New York: McGraw-Hill, pp 51-60.

### Further resources

- Davis, M. S. (1971) 'That's interesting: Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology' *Philosophy of Social Science* 1:309-344.

## 11. Be Persuasive

The Harvard Program on Negotiation (see: [www.pon.harvard.edu](http://www.pon.harvard.edu)) has spent many years understanding human needs in order to develop clearer guidelines for those wishing to reach agreement with others without giving in. They believe that as more attention is devoted to positions, less attention is devoted to meeting the underlying concerns of the parties. In positional bargaining you try to improve the chance of a favourable settlement to you by starting with extreme views and stubbornly holding on to them. It becomes a contest of will with negotiators asserting what they will and won't do. Being nice is also no answer. If you are too concerned about keeping relationships sweet and play a soft game, you run the risk of reaching an agreement that does not serve your needs, especially if the other side plays a hard game. The alternative involves: (i) separating the people from the problem; (ii) focusing on interests, not positions; (iii) inventing options for mutual gain; (iv) insisting on using objective criteria.

The first point responds to the fact that human beings have emotions. Participants should see themselves as working side by side, attacking the problem, but not each other – there is no reason why they should not empathise with each other's predicament. Taking positions, however, makes things worse, as people's egos become attached to positions. The second point reflects the fact that compromising between positions is not likely to produce an agreement which will effectively take care of the human needs and interests that led people to adopt those positions.

Trying to come up with a solution that successfully fulfils both party's needs and interests requires a creative approach which can often be inhibited by having a lot at stake and being under pressure. It is best to set aside time to lay out options for mutual gain, without any pressure to agree on them. Finally, to ensure that no one party blocks proceedings by being irrational or stubborn, it is important to insist on objective criteria.

The above principles emphasise managing human emotion separately from the practical problem and highlight the human need to feel heard, understood, respected and valued. Dale Carnegie similarly summarises 12 general and widely relevant principles in the classic 'How to win friends and influence people' (see Box 3).

### **Box 3: 12 principles to win people to your way of thinking**

1. The only way to get the best out of an argument is to avoid it.
2. Show respect for the other person's opinions. Never say 'you're wrong'.
3. If you are wrong, admit it quickly and emphatically.
4. Begin in a friendly way.
5. Get the other person saying 'yes, yes' immediately.
6. Let the other person do a great deal of talking.
7. Let the other person feel that the idea is his or hers.
8. Try honestly to see things from the other person's point of view.
9. Be sympathetic with the other person's ideas and desires.
10. Appeal to the nobler motives.
11. Dramatise your ideas.
12. Throw down a challenge.

### **Source**

- The Program on Negotiation at Harvard, see: [www.pon.harvard.edu](http://www.pon.harvard.edu).
- Carnegie, Dale (1990) *How To Win Friends and Influence People*, New York: Pocket.

## Targeting Tools

## 12. Writing Policy Papers

The purpose of the policy paper is to provide a comprehensive and persuasive argument justifying the policy recommendations presented in the paper, and therefore to act as a decision-making tool and a call to action for the target audience.

In summarising the ideals and values of the field of policy science, the applied nature of the discipline is central. There are two main factors which differentiate policy science from traditional academia as described below.

### Designing solutions for real-world problems

Unlike traditional academia which focuses on building knowledge within a group of peers, policy science must address real-world problems, and therefore provide recommendations and a framework for their application within the targeted society. For example, it is not enough to analyse the causes and patterns of unemployment in a particular society in order to contribute to its understanding as a social phenomenon; a policy study must apply this knowledge to the real situation on the ground by understanding the causes, showing that it is a problem within the community in question and suggesting a course of action to address the problem. Hence, the problem-solution relationship must be seen at the heart of the discipline, which means that any analysis undertaken must be driven and targeted on the search for a practical, implementable and comprehensive outcome.

### Presenting value-driven arguments

The search for such a practical outcome not only requires a well-elaborated and comprehensive analysis of all available data, but as the issues under consideration are of a societal nature, the policy researcher or analyst will also have to make some value-driven judgements about the outcome that would best address the specific problem. Hence, proposing specific solutions in the highly politicised environment of public policy and to such a broad audience, means that central to the work of the policy specialist is not just the cold empiricism of data analysis, but probably even more important is the ability to convince your audience of the suitability of your policy recommendations. In other words, the presentation of the outcomes of your data analysis will probably not be enough to make an impact in the policy debate on a particular issue, but through the use of this data as evidence in a comprehensive and coherent argument of your position, you will give your work the best possible chance of having this impact. Majone (1989) sums up this idea excellently:

*Like surgery, the making of policy and the giving of policy advice are exercises of skills, and we do not judge skilful performance by the amount of information stored in the head of the performer or by the amount of formal planning. Rather, we judge it by criteria like good timing and attention to details; by the capacity to recognise the limits of the possible, to use limitations creatively, and to learn from one's mistakes; by the ability not to show what should be done, but to persuade people to do what they know should be done (p. 20).*

### Planning checklist

In preparing to write your policy paper, consider the policymaking process that you are involved in and research that you (and your colleagues) have done to answer the following questions:

- Which stage(s) in the policymaking process are you trying to influence through your policy paper?
- Which stakeholders have been/are involved at each stage of the policymaking process?

- Have you identified a clear problem to address? Can you summarise it in two sentences?
- Do you have sufficiently comprehensive evidence to support your claim that a problem exists?
- Have you outlined and evaluated the possible policy options that could solve this problem? What evaluation criteria did you use?
- Have you decided on a preferred alternative?
- Do you have sufficient evidence to effectively argue for your chosen policy alternative over the others?

Young and Quinn (2002) also include checklists for the following: policy paper outline; title; table of contents; executive summary; introduction; problem description; argumentation; policy options; conclusions and recommendations.

## Source

- Young, Eóin and Lisa Quinn (2002) 'Writing Effective Public Policy Papers: A Guide To Policy Advisers in Central and Eastern Europe', *LGI Documents*, [http://lgi.osi.hu/publications\\_datasheet.php?id=112](http://lgi.osi.hu/publications_datasheet.php?id=112)

## Further resources

- Majone, Giandomenico (1989) *Evidence, argument and persuasion in the policy process*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- 'Writing a Policy Memo', [http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/acbrooks/Pages/Courses/Documents/NP\\_Econ/Policy%20memo%20instructions%20NP%20mgmt.pdf](http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/acbrooks/Pages/Courses/Documents/NP_Econ/Policy%20memo%20instructions%20NP%20mgmt.pdf).
- Musso, Juliet, Robert Biller and Robert Myrtle (2000) 'Tradecraft: Professional Writing as Problem Solving', *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 19(4):635-646.
- 'Guidelines for Writing a Policy Brief', <http://jhunix.hcf.jhu.edu/~ktsai/policybrief.html>.
- 'Writing criteria for policy memos' (adapted from Steve Frank), see: [www.pubpol.duke.edu/centers/dewitt/course/memoguide.html](http://www.pubpol.duke.edu/centers/dewitt/course/memoguide.html).
- 'Internal Procedures and Effective Brief Writing in the fifth Circuit', see: [www.cooley.com/files/tbl\\_s5SiteRepository/FileUpload21/302/A-Ploeger-%20Internal%20Procedures%20and%20Effective%20Briefwriting%20in%20the%20Fifth%20Circuit.pdf](http://www.cooley.com/files/tbl_s5SiteRepository/FileUpload21/302/A-Ploeger-%20Internal%20Procedures%20and%20Effective%20Briefwriting%20in%20the%20Fifth%20Circuit.pdf)
- Eugene Bardach (1997) *The Eight Step Path to Policy Analysis*, Berkeley Academic Press.

## 13. Building a Community of Practice

Communities of practice have become the most natural way in which tacit knowledge is managed within organisations and knowledge fields. They are not structured teams. Instead, they are informal groups or networks of professionals who share common problems, common interests or common knowledge, and who communicate with each other about this. They are a great target and resource if you want to communicate information, evidence or knowledge.

The core competency of communities of practice is that they can enable a learning conversation. Communities of practice encourage people to bring quality to their work because the network feeds their passion. Organisations can shepherd their core competencies through nurturing communities of practice. The main value of communities of practice come from the messy conversations that people can have either face-to-face or through virtual conversations, because it is through these interactions that people can ask questions, receive answers and do their work most effectively.

### Key ingredients in Communities of practice

Designing a community is akin to planning a city. Everything is a negotiation between the design and the community itself that can accept or reject aspects of the design. Key elements are:

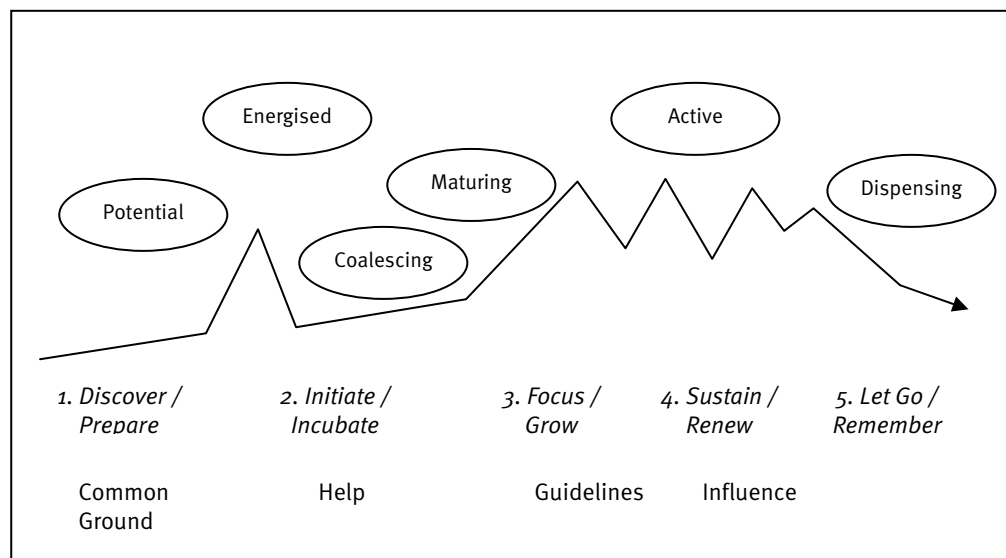
- *Purpose*. Shared purpose, or passion; shared needs and clear value potential pertain. Scott Peck describes various stages of communities of practice: pseudo-communities (in which people remain at the level of politeness); chaos (where people decide that they need to defend their views); emptiness (people empty themselves of the desire of changing others); and community building.
- *Enablers* include technology, time, budget, support and incentives.
- *Leadership* of the community (dealt with in greater depth below).
- *Processes*. People may want to use different means of communicating which is why flexible communication strategies are as important as storytelling and learning conversations.
- *People*. Competencies, affinities, commitment, behaviours and diversity of perspectives are all elements that people bring to communities of practice.
- *Time* (cited as an enabler) is a key issue.

### Leadership roles and responsibilities in fostering Communities of practice

- Virtual conversations can become very disjointed and the leader must ensure that the threads are easily woven to overcome possible fragmentation.
- In a virtual environment people get hurt because it is easy to misread intentions and leaders must manage this. Events should be created to keep the life of the community healthy. A community can be actively nurtured to improve participation and the experiences of members.
- Communities of practice have to be marketed so that levels of participation are improved.
- Leaders also have to believe that communities of practice add value to the core business of an organisation so that they can honestly defend the space needed for communities of practice to function effectively.
- The task of communities of practice is to contribute to an organisation so that it becomes more sophisticated at doing what it does better. Communities of practice need to move beyond helping each other, to developing a more proactive forward-looking role: away from parochialism towards boundlessness.

## Stages of development

Figure 6: Communities of Practice: Stages of Development



Source: Adapted from McDermott and Wenger (2000)

There is always a flush of enthusiasm for new communities of practice when they come into being. Invariably this wears off and Scott Peck's 'emptiness' phase is experienced. Reflection and refocusing become important and integration into the organisation has to be addressed. The rationale for involvement becomes pertinent and the community of practice as a whole deals with the rhythms of its life.

### Source

- De Merode, Louis (2000) 'Introduction to Communities of Practice' in the report of the Bellanet Workshop, Brighton, see: [www.km4dev.org/index.php/articles/htmlpages/198](http://www.km4dev.org/index.php/articles/htmlpages/198).

### Further resources

- Wenger, Etienne and William Snyder (2000) 'Communities of Practice: the organisational frontier', in *Harvard Business Review*, January-February 2000.
- KM4DEV Communities of Practice resource page, see: [www.km4dev.org/index.php/articles/c151/](http://www.km4dev.org/index.php/articles/c151/).
- Ramalingam, Ben (2005) 'Tools for Knowledge and Learning', *RAPID Toolkit*, London: ODI, see: [www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM\\_toolkit\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM_toolkit_web.pdf), especially for further resources on the step-by-step process and more detailed explanations of each step.

## 14. Lobbying

Organisations engaged in lobbying activities seek to persuade public bodies of the reasons why certain issues, policies or laws should be supported or rejected. Despite its somewhat tarnished reputation, lobbying remains a useful tool for charities seeking to make an impact in the public sphere. Lobbying is a means by which organisations can further their objectives by influencing the direction and content of government policy decisions.

### Techniques for lobbying government

Various channels and techniques exist for pressuring and influencing government. Whichever approaches you decide to adopt you should be mindful of the legal constraints detailed at the end of this document.

- Remember that ministers are not usually experts in the fields they represent. Your charity should aim to establish itself as the foremost authority in its field while fostering a relationship with the relevant department. In time you may be called upon for comment or advice.
- Consider seeking to influence other groups that are integral to the political process. Backbench MPs, opposition politicians, select committees, all-party groups, lords, civil servants, think tanks and the media may respond well to your message.
- Be positive in your approach. Seek to shape and respond to government policy rather than criticise it.
- Consider the specific structures, interests and needs of regional government. Is the angle your charity adopts when lobbying MSPs in Scotland suitable for use in Wales and England too?
- Be aware of the agenda and language of the current government. Tailor your approach and adopt a tone that is in tune with the people you seek to influence.
- Time your approach carefully. Inopportune lobbying is counterproductive and reveals your organisation's lack of understanding in the political process.
- Consider lobbying government in conjunction with other organisations that share similar goals to your charity. This tactic has the benefit of maximising a minister's time while impressing upon them the weight of support for your cause.

### Attracting a politician's backing for your cause

Members of your charity should seek to cultivate the support of their local MP. Enthusiastic MPs will pursue their constituents' concerns, and thus your charity's cause, through a variety of channels in parliament. They may ask questions of ministers and the PM or propose a motion relating to your campaign. Your appeal for support will be one of many an MP receives everyday. To attract an MP's attention to your cause, therefore, consider employing one or more of the following techniques:

- Identify and target politicians who may have a particular interest in your charity's cause. Check national newspapers or Hansard for records of the issues in which they have expressed an interest.
- Provide facts about the potential effects of your charity's campaign on the minister's/MP's constituency.
- Invite the local MP to your charity's events in their constituency.
- Arrange for an MP to meet local charity workers or beneficiaries of your charity's work.



- Urge your charity's grassroots members to lobby their local MP by visiting MPs' surgeries or writing letters expressing their concerns and asking for support.
- Think carefully about the value of postcard campaigns. They are often limited in their impact.
- Remember that a politician's time is precious. Your charity should ensure that time and resources designated for lobbying are used wisely.

## Using the media to lobby

The press reports policy announcements and key political debates every day. Newspapers in particular are an important means of communicating the major political stories of the day. Some people believe that the press may influence the political agenda and put pressure on the government to alter the course of its policies.

- Use the media to communicate your organisation's message and its response to the issues and policy decisions of the day.
- Make yourself well known to journalists to ensure that you will be called upon for comment when an issue relevant to your organisation hits the news.
- Ministers do keep abreast of what the newspapers are covering and which issues are making the headlines. If you are to capture the government's attention you should aim to gain maximum coverage of your story in the broadsheets.
- After an important policy announcement be prepared to respond quickly in order to get your message to the newspapers before your competitors. The faster your response the more likely you are to feature in a news story, gaining vital coverage and attention for your campaign.
- Some newspapers will take up a story or run a campaign that seeks both to shape public opinion and influence ministers. The relationships you build with journalists will make all the difference as to whether it is your charity's campaign that is featured.

## Charity political campaigning: the law

Registered charities cannot legally be political bodies. Your charity may still contribute to the political process, however, so long as you are mindful of the political constraints.

- Activities in the political sphere should further the purposes of your charity.
- Your charity cannot state as its aim the attainment of a political purpose and its activities must be for the public benefit. Actions explicitly seeking to further or oppose government policy are not considered charitable.
- Your charity can still engage in activities aimed at securing or opposing changes in the law, government policy or decisions. The charity's trustees may take some political actions on its behalf as a means of achieving your stated aims. Such activities must clearly serve your charity's purposes and be subordinate to them.
- Your charity must ensure that adequate provisions are in place for the commissioning, control and evaluation of political activity.
- Non-charitable voluntary organisations, on the other hand, are free within the law to support any cause they desire.
- For further information on charity lobbying and the law in the UK, see: [www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc9.asp](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc9.asp).

## **Source**

- The Media Trust, see: [www.mediatrust.org/online\\_guides/charity\\_lobbying.html](http://www.mediatrust.org/online_guides/charity_lobbying.html).

## **Further resources**

- Dodds, Felix (2004) *How to Lobby at Intergovernmental Meetings*, Earthscan.  
Organisations spend considerable resources taking staff to international meetings, often without understanding how these meetings work. This publication by Felix Dodds, Executive Director of the Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future in London, is a guide on how to participate and be heard at intergovernmental meetings, whether as a stakeholder or a government official. Based on 10 years of lobbying at the international level, this book provides advice on the preparation and presentation of ideas, the consultation and negotiating process, and practical and logistical matters. It also contains reference material including tips for navigating the intergovernmental hot spots of New York and Geneva; lists of UN commissions; conferences and permanent missions; contact details of key international organisations, NGOs and stakeholder groups; and useful web addresses.

## 15. The Gilbert Email Manifesto (GEM)

Repeat after me: 'Email is more important than my website!'

I can't stand it any more. I've listened to too many four-hour workshops about online fundraising in which it's all about websites, websites, websites. I've been to too many technical assistance sites that have class after class on web design. I've heard too many non-profits obsess about their websites.

I ask leaders of non-profit organisations if they have an email strategy and their usual response is something on the order of 'huh?' They are spending enormous amounts of money and staff time on their websites and it's the rare exception that the organisation even has enough of an email strategy to have a newsletter. They are wasting their money. I'm serious.

Why is this happening? Is it because websites are pretty and email is mostly text? Is it because people love graphic design? Is it because this is the approach that is pushed by the consulting firms? Or is it perhaps because thinking about email is a little more difficult, as it is a constantly moving target?

I don't know the reasons for sure, but I do know that something can be done. I have been recommending 'Three Rules of Email' to help non-profit organisations develop a genuine Internet strategy and avoid being seduced by their own web presence:

- Rule 1: Resources spent on email strategies are more valuable than the same resources spent on web strategies.
- Rule 2: A website built around an email strategy is more valuable than a website that is built around itself.
- Rule 3: Email oriented thinking will yield better strategic thinking overall.

Non-profits that truly embrace these three rules will reach a genuine breakthrough in their online presence. They will seize the initiative from technologists and guide their own technology on their terms.

Let me elaborate. For each of these principles I will scratch the surface as to why it's true and how it might be applied. Each of these is worthy of several workshops in their own right.

### **Rule 1: Resources spent on email strategies are more valuable than the same resources spent on web strategies**

However unglamorous it might be, email is the killer application of the Internet. It is person-to-person communication, and the one thing that breaks down barriers faster than anything else on the net. Consider these facts:

- Everybody on the net has email and most of them read most of their messages.
- People visit far fewer websites than they get email messages.
- Email messages are treated as To Do items, while bookmarks are often forgotten. Email is always a call to action.
- Email is handled within a familiar user interface, whereas each website has to teach a new interface.
- Email is a very personal medium.

Stop obsessing about how many hits your website gets and start counting how much email interaction you have with your stakeholders. Stop waiting for people to discover your website, and start discovering their mailboxes.

## **Rule 2: A website built around an email strategy is more valuable than a website that is built around itself**

On some non-profit list, somewhere, someone right now is asking how they can get more traffic on their website. And someone is answering by telling them how to put META tags in their site so they will get listed in search engines. This is so tired....

My answer to this tired question is simple: Send them there with email!

Obviously this means there has to be a purpose for them to go to the website that cannot be fulfilled with the email message itself. Some of the obvious ways that a website can supplement your email strategy include:

- gathering email addresses in the first place
- archiving your relationships with stakeholders (e.g. collecting the results of surveys)
- serving as a library to back up your smaller email communications
- providing actual online tools for your stakeholders
- providing web forms that allow you to structure your communication and pull it into databases

## **Rule 3: Email oriented thinking will yield better strategic thinking overall**

Last year, the most common question I was asked by journalists reporting on the Internet and non-profits was about the role of the Internet in fundraising. My response was always the same:

The ability to process credit card transactions is the equivalent of having a checking account. It's not very interesting, and it's not actually fundraising. The true power of the Internet for fundraising (or any other stakeholder relationship) is the power of personal communication combined with the power of scale. Non-profits know how to mobilise people on a personal level. By using the Internet appropriately, they can do so on a scale never before possible.

Understanding email will make this possible. True, not all personal, online communication takes place through email, but email is the canonical 'closed loop relationship' that direct marketing managers understand so well. Applied well, it will allow non-profits to succeed on a whole new level.

Repeat after me: 'Email is more important than my website!'

### **Source**

- Gilbert, Michael (2001) 'The Gilbert Email Manifesto (GEM)' at [http://news.gilbert.org/features/featurereader\\$3608](http://news.gilbert.org/features/featurereader$3608).

### **Further resources**

- Ramalingam, Ben (2005) 'Tools for Knowledge and Learning', *RAPID Toolkit*, London: ODI, see: [www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM\\_toolkit\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM_toolkit_web.pdf), especially for further resources on the step-by-step process and more detailed explanations of each step.

## 16. Websites

The web aims to make information available, freely and in forms that are easily accessible ('click and go' information; multimedia options for accessing information and/or the option of collecting and/or providing feedback). The array of computer software and graphics packages and the capacity of the web as a publicity tool, information source and forum for public input or electronic democracy is expanding, increasing the application of this participatory tool. Websites are particularly useful for people in remote areas accessing project information and are more effective than information repositories in this regard. As well, websites make ideal community notice boards for small organisations and provide sources for interaction when they invite feedback and provide email addresses or chat options. They are readily updateable and can be used to dispatch information with relative ease. The web is an emerging consultation tool and both its application and number of users continue to expand.

### Uses/strengths

- Can provide publicity, information and limited public input
- Capable of reaching very large numbers with enormous amounts of information
- Offers a low cost way of distributing larger documents
- Offers a highly accessible forum for posting project updates

### Special considerations/weaknesses

- Many people still cannot access the web
- Many people are still not web literate
- Its success as a participatory tool is still relatively unknown
- Information overload and poor design can prevent people from finding what they need

### Method

- Contact a web designer, or find someone within the organisation with web design skills.
- Discuss the 'architecture', all the levels of information, links and illustrations available and necessary to inform and engage the user.
- Do some background research, web-surfing in your chosen area or field. Discover what works well on other websites, what they cover, what they omit, and use this information to improve your own website.
- Trial the website before releasing it to the public. A bad experience with a website can mean people do not return. Ensure all links are working, and that the material scrolls smoothly with minimum delays.
- Launch the website with suitable coverage in the media, in newsletters, and in a public forum.
- Ensure that you have alternative communication options for those who are not web-literate or do not have access to the web.
- Place the website address on all correspondence and other printed material from the organisation.

## **How do people behave online?**

- Users are impatient, they are generally short of time and might be paying for their connection.
- Users want instant gratification, they want to see the value of a page immediately, if they do not, there are many other pages available to them.
- Users are active not passive, the Web is a user-driven medium where users have the power to move easily from page to page and want to use it.

## **Why is reading online different from reading on a page?**

- Reading from computer screens is tiring for the eyes and 25% slower than paper.
- Each page must compete with hundreds of millions of others which can be easily accessed, people are less willing to commit the time investment to reading a page in the hope that it is useful.
- Web pages do not have the same credibility as known journals or books, users make judgments about the value of information based on different criteria.

## **How do people read on the web?**

- Eight out of 10 users don't read – they scan the page looking for the information they need.
- Users don't scroll down long pages unless they are clearly told it might contain something useful for them.
- Users don't like hype, the internet is full of marketing that users have learned to ignore when looking for specific information.

## **Implications for research dissemination**

Studies show that when users are faced with a long online document that they would like to read, they print it. The key challenge for successfully communicating the full text of research outputs online is convincing users to print your document.

### **Sources:**

- Citizen Science Toolbox, see: [www.coastal.crc.org.au/toolbox/index.asp](http://www.coastal.crc.org.au/toolbox/index.asp).
- GNet Toolkit: Disseminating Research Online , see: [www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=373](http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=373).

### **Further resources**

- Grant, C. and M. Pirotta (2002) Connecting Communities, (section on Communicating with residents websites), Improvement and Development Agency UK, Partnerships Online (1999) 'A Toolkit for Online Communities', see: [www.partnerships.org.uk](http://www.partnerships.org.uk).
- More information about how people use the web can be found at Jakob Nielsen's site, see: [www.useit.com](http://www.useit.com).
- Find the most searchable keywords to use on your website:
  - Wordtracker, see: [www.wordtracker.com](http://www.wordtracker.com)
  - Overture, see: <http://inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/>

- The Media Trust Online Guide: Getting your website noticed, see: [www.mediatrust.org/online\\_guides/website\\_guide.html](http://www.mediatrust.org/online_guides/website_guide.html).
- Ramalingam, Ben (2005) 'Tools for Knowledge and Learning', *RAPID Toolkit*, London: ODI, see: [www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM\\_toolkit\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM_toolkit_web.pdf), especially for further resources on the step-by-step process and more detailed explanations of each step.

## 17. Blogging

Blogging is a growing trend, and an easy and informal way to communicate with a wide range of people. It requires some input but can also provide you with useful and encouraging feedback. *Weblogs*, or *Blogs* for short, are often likened to journals. The entries made to blogs can be either interactive or non-interactive. If they are interactive, others can add commentaries to the entry. The person who writes this online journal is known as a *Blogger*. One of the most attractive elements of a blog is that they can be written with relative ease by anyone about anything (source: <http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/Spring05/Urriste/weblogs.html>). Each weblog entry (also known as a post) will typically contain one or more links to related material being discussed in the entry. For topic-oriented weblogs the diversity is enormous. There are hundreds of thousands of blogs already online, covering such diverse topics as politics, war, Africa, science, technology, the Internet, books, space exploration, medicine and academic life. Despite the buzz, weblogs really are not all that new; they have been around since the late 1990s. Recent software and hosting platforms have made blogging much easier to do, and this has led to the explosion of weblogs (source: [www.writerswrite.com/journal/julo2/gak16.htm](http://www.writerswrite.com/journal/julo2/gak16.htm)).

### Why blog?

- A blog can extend an institution's influence by attracting development policymakers and practitioners to engage in a way that is more interactive than websites and e-mail;
- Blogs can create a forum for expert commentary and analysis on burning development policy issues;
- Easy-to-read, incisive informal writing can demystify jargon, cut straight to the chase and make the case for important policy issues that are not in the spotlight;
- Weblogs can help set the media agenda – authoritative comment and analysis on under- or un-reported issues can lead journalists or others to follow up and write about it;
- For those interested in a specific topic, relevant blogs could eventually become a leading supplement to traditional print and online news;
- The feedback loops created by the blog could lead to new audiences and collaboration opportunities, such as media requests and commissions (e.g. for op-ed pieces).

### Some examples:

- The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) Blog – commentary from leading development experts, see: <http://blogs.odi.org.uk/blogs/main/>.
- On a specific issue: Centre for Global Development blog on Vaccines for Development at <http://blogs.cgdev.org/globalhealth/archive/vaccines/>.
- Within a professional field: RealClimate, a blog on climate science aims to be a commentary site for the interested public and journalists. Working climate scientists post comments, and the discussion is restricted to scientific topics. The site provides a quick response to developing stories and provides the context sometimes missing in mainstream commentary, see: [www.realclimate.org](http://www.realclimate.org).
- Global Growth, see: [www.global-growth.org/blog](http://www.global-growth.org/blog).
- International Rescue Committee, see: <http://ircblog.org>.
- CIVITAS, see: [www.civitas.org.uk/blog/](http://www.civitas.org.uk/blog/).
- Adam Smith Institute, see: [www.adamsmith.org/blog](http://www.adamsmith.org/blog).



## Editorial guidelines for blogs

*Issues, not Personalities:* Many of the blogs on the internet are personal diaries. Institutional blogs are different – they are collaborative weblogs, produced by several members of staff to shed interesting perspectives on topical issues. So focus on hot topics, issues that are either on the development agenda or issues you think should be. Writing in the first person is default blogging style. However, avoid excessively personalising the posts – although you should by all means link to your previous articles or posts as relevant.

*Stick to What You Know and Add Value:* Before you write, make sure your intended topic is within your area of expertise. Postings will result in feedback – so be prepared to write or speak in more detail about your area of expertise. If you are not comfortable about a specific topic, leave it to others. Stick to the facts and only posit an argument or opinion if you can illustrate it concretely. Before you post, ask yourself: ‘Am I adding value?’

*Be Clear, Complete, Concise:* Your text should be clear, complete and concise. Avoid jargon and explain things using simple language. Make sure your argument or the point you want to make flows well. Run a spell check before you share your views. Remember, once you have pressed the ‘send’ button, your post is in the public domain! If you make a mistake, quickly correct it and admit your error, before someone else does it for you.

*It’s a Two-way Street:* The web is all about links; if you intend to write, make sure you look around and read what others have posted. Referring to the work of others or linking to it will provide readers with more material to read, and will also generate backward linkages. Each post should contain at least one link, ideally two or three, to work related to the issues being raised.

*Be Who You Are:* Many bloggers work anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. To be credible, it may be more effective to be transparent and honest. In an institutional blog, staff will usually use their own names (and will have a summary of their expertise available).

*Love Your Audience:* You should not post any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libellous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing to another person or to any person or entity.

*Respect Copyright Laws:* In order to protect your institution, you must respect laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else’s work. Refer to other people’s work and link to it.

*Caveat Personal Opinions:* If this is an institutional blog, postings by staff are the institution’s liability. However, any personal comment on particular issues (these are encouraged in blogs!) should be prefaced or preceded by a caveat: ‘What I’m about to write/have just written is entirely my personal view, and is not intended to represent official organisational policy or positions’.

## Further resources

- Civiblog: A resource for those doing civil society work and wanting a free, hosted blog platform with the ability to aggregate with other related blogs. ‘Civiblog, a one-stop-site for global civil society. We are tapping into two explosive movements at once: (i) the growth of the citizen sector and (ii) blogging, which is an increasingly popular tool with the potential to empower citizens the world over, one post at a time. Civiblog is completely free – no hosting costs or licensing fees. Civiblog is targeted – designed by and for civil society workers. Civiblog is community-driven – news from around the world, written by you’, see: [www.civiblog.org](http://www.civiblog.org).
- Blogging news and resources, see: [www.writerswrite.com/blogging](http://www.writerswrite.com/blogging).

## *Successful Communication*

- ICTs for Development blog, see: <http://community.eldis.org/ict/>.
- Ramalingam, Ben (2005) 'Tools for Knowledge and Learning', *RAPID Toolkit*, London: ODI, see: [www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM\\_toolkit\\_web.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Rapid/Publications/Documents/KM_toolkit_web.pdf), especially for further resources on the step-by-step process and more detailed explanations of each step.

## 18. Media Engagement

The Wilder Manual (Angelica, 2001) summarises the steps you need to have gone through to be ‘camera ready’, or simply to engage more actively with the media. The checklist is useful when reflecting on how to be camera ready and how to build up a rapid response team who can respond to relevant media opportunities.

### Box 4: Media ready checklist

#### *Organisational Assessment:*

- Does your organisation have a media strategy?
- Is the media plan discussed as part of the overall influencing plan?
- Do you revise the media plan on a regular basis as your influence campaign evolves?

#### *Organisational Infrastructure:*

- Do you have a staff person who is responsible for carrying out the media plan and coordinating all the media efforts in your organisation?
- Do you have a planning calendar of key political events?
- Has your organisation identified its primary, formal spokespersons?
- Do your spokespersons need media training and preparation?
- Have your board and staff prepared a plan for ‘rapid response’ to an opportunity or a crisis that presents itself with little warning?
- Is the chain of decision-making for media statements clearly designated and understood by everyone within the organisation?
- Does your public policy budget have a media component?

#### *Media Systems:*

- Are your media lists up-to-date, complete with names of editors, reporters or producers for all media outlets you plan to use?
- Do you know deadlines, work hours and preferred communications modes for key people who work on your public policy issues?
- Do your lists distinguish types of coverage: news, feature, editorial, columns, calendars?
- Do you have a clipping file for all relevant media coverage and for a complete record of coverage of your organisation’s work?
- Are you in regular contact with the editor and reporters you have designated as key contacts?

#### *Is your information media ready?*

- Do you have accurate, concise, interesting information about your organisation – its mission, history, programmes and services?
- Have you shaped a clear message and talking points for the policy issue you plan to raise?
- Have you held introductory meetings with members of the press who are likely to cover your organisation and issues?
- Do you maintain an information base that is a valuable resource to the press, including a portfolio of data and stories, and a list of staff or others who are willing to talk to the press?

*Source:* Angelica (2001)

Building capacity and opportunity to use the media means building relationships with those who work in the media, namely journalists. You are a resource for them just as much as they can be a resource for you. Box 5 explains how that relationship can be built and maintained.

### **Box 5: Tips on becoming a resource for journalists**

- Be available. Give reporters, especially at news services where they work odd hours, home and mobiles numbers and tell them it's OK to call.
- Seek journalists at meetings etc and give them your business card.
- Be ready to be quoted. Having to call back once the quote has been cleared will reduce the chance of the quote being used.
- Know the issues. Read and comment intelligently on developments relating to your cause.
- Don't always assume journalists have received the information you have about topical events or relevant news releases.
- Avoid rhetoric and ideological arguments; most journalists have heard all this before.
- Know your facts; never pass on information unless you know it's true.
- Know where to find information or contacts fast and therefore gain a reputation as a good source.

*Source: Salzmann, Ch 5, p.67*

Getting into the papers requires more than just having good relations. You can not always hope that friendly journalists will find your issue newsworthy (often it won't be). The key is timing and linking your findings and message with breaking news. Jump on opportunities to publicise your message when your issue is already in the news because then you do not need to persuade them it is newsworthy. You just need to offer them a story or photo opportunity that illustrates a new or local perspective, dramatises a point of view, or advances the debate somehow. Acting fast is key, usually a day after the news has broken. Key 'news hooks' might include: a public hearing; court decision; passage of a bill; a natural disaster; a major speech; a nomination; a national holiday; a crime; or an anniversary.

If an issue becomes a major story then the paper may run an editorial on it. These carry the most weight in policy circles and are a good way to bring issues onto the agenda, or state a position in an evolving agenda. Box 6 describes ways to get your views into the editorial.

### **Box 6: Tips for getting an editorial**

- Familiarise yourself with the position of the newspaper.
- Identify the right person on the editorial team and get their email address.
- Explain your position in a short email and ask whether and how they would like to receive information (email, phone, meeting).
- If you don't receive a response in a couple of days, call. Persistence pays.
- If you are accepted it's likely you'll go into the office to discuss the issues.
- Conduct a trial session first, practise difficult questions, and further familiarise yourself with the editorial position.
- Don't expect more than half an hour, and make sure anyone you take can explain their views simply.
- Ask what they need from you.
- Bring written material, even if you've emailed them in advance. Don't show videos.
- Send a follow-up email offering further information.
- Offer to submit an opinion editorial if they do not adopt your position.

*Source: Salzmann, Ch 22, p.168*

Publications, new projects, and high profile meetings or visits are all reasons a CSO might try to make the news. There is protocol on writing press releases, but publications themselves can also be made more newsworthy. Box 7 describes some methods for how to do this.

### Box 7: Tips on writing press releases

- Determine what is the main news angle you wish to communicate.
- Connect the report to a news hook.
- Check deadlines for local publications/television/radio bulletins to ensure the media release is received in time to be published before the event. (Some local newspapers have a Friday deadline for the following Wednesday publication date. Radio programmes may need to check the spokesperson to see whether they will be suitable for on-air interview, etc.)
- On average, send releases two weeks before events, except to magazines which may have a two to three month lead time for publication.
- Keep the focus local (with local spokespeople) for local papers. Send only major capital city issues or state-wide issues to state papers; only national issues (and use national spokespeople) for national papers/magazines.
- First paragraph of no more than 25 words telling briefly who, what, where, when and why about the event, issue or project.
- Use short sentences. Each sentence should be a separate paragraph. Use active sentences ('The group have decided', not 'It has been decided'). Avoid jargon and difficult words. Keep it simple. Make numbers more meaningful by making comparisons or breaking them down into familiar units.
- If using quotes in the body of the release, quote credible spokespeople and identify them with their positions in the organisation.
- Keep information clear and unambiguous.
- Keep releases short, no longer than one page. If the media want more information, they will contact you.
- Include in the media release the date the release was written, and a contact name and phone number for someone who is easily contacted during office hours. Put the summary on your website and include the link in any press release.
- Check whether the media prefers email (most do now).
- If offering interviews, make it clear whether this is an exclusive for one media outlet (could be one print, one radio and one television, as these do not see one another as competing). This can encourage coverage of your issue, whereas a general media conference may not be well attended.
- Track coverage to see how and when your information is published.
- Be sure to write and thank the journalist to develop a relationship that may encourage them to work with your organisation in tracking progress on the issue/project, and hence keep the community informed.

Source: Citizen Science Toolbox, see: [www.coastal.crc.org.au/toolbox/index.asp](http://www.coastal.crc.org.au/toolbox/index.asp)

### Further resources

- Angelica, Emil (2001) *The Wilder Non-profit Field Guide to Crafting Effective Mission and Vision Statements*, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.
- International Association for Public Participation (2000) 'IAP2 Public Participation Toolbox', see: [www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/toolbox.pdf](http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/toolbox.pdf).
- RCRA (1996) 'Public participation activities' in *Public Participation Manual*, see: [www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/permit/pubpart/chp\\_5.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/permit/pubpart/chp_5.pdf).
- Social Change Online (2000) 'Using the Media', see: [http://media.socialchange.net.au/using\\_media/Contents.html](http://media.socialchange.net.au/using_media/Contents.html).
- Thornton, P. et al. (1997) *I Protest!* Sydney: Pluto Press.
- Warringah Council (2000) Community Consultation Toolkit, see: [www.warringah.nsw.gov.au/publications/documents/community\\_consultation\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.warringah.nsw.gov.au/publications/documents/community_consultation_toolkit.pdf).

## 19. Radio

Radio has enormous potential to communicate to a wide audience, especially with the mushrooming of FM radio stations throughout the world and access to radio through the internet. Radio also has the advantage of being able to ‘bring to life’ development issues, events and activities, thus often transmitting messages in an interesting and effective way.

In terms of practical advice on how to write and produce radio programmes, the Communication Initiative (see: [www.comminit.com](http://www.comminit.com)) offers useful guidelines. For example, the book *Writing and Producing Radio Dramas* (by Esta de Fossard) is one of a series called *Communication for Behaviour Change* and gives practical guidance on how to design, write, and produce radio dramas aimed at motivating social change. Divided into three parts, the book begins by introducing the concept of Entertainment-Education and its use in radio serial drama. It goes on to describe the duties of the programme manager of such projects, and concludes with tips for drama writers.

### Box 8: How Internet Radio Can Change the World

*An Activist's Handbook: How to listen, how to broadcast, and how it will change the world* (by Eric Lee)

This handbook is for trade unionists, environmental campaigners, human rights activists or anyone working to change the world. Eric Lee is the author of ‘The Labour Movement and the Internet: The New Internationalism (1996)’, the first book on the subject of how trade unions could make use of the new communications technologies. He has pioneered the use of the Internet by unions around the globe, and the website he established in 1998, LabourStart, now appears in 19 languages and is used by thousands of activists every day. In early 2004, the author launched the first online labour radio station and this book reveals exactly what was involved in setting it up. It also delves into the short history of Internet radio, revealing how what began as a radical project to reinvigorate the liberal wing of the Democratic Party was turned into a commercial success – and yet remains a vital tool for activists.

Source: [www.labourstart.org/radio/book.shtml](http://www.labourstart.org/radio/book.shtml)

### A good example

A radio soap opera called ‘Twende Na Wakati’ focused on issues surrounding HIV/AIDS in Tanzania. A study on the effectiveness and reach of this radio programme compared one region of the country where no one was able to hear the broadcasts (due to technical limitations) with the rest of the population, many of whom did hear the broadcasts. The study found convincingly that radio positively affected people’s behaviour in relation to HIV/AIDS in the ‘treatment’ area, and demonstrated direct cause and effect (Vaughan, Rogers, Singhal and Swalahe, 2000).

### Further resources

- De Fossard, Esta ‘Writing and Producing Radio Dramas’, see: [www.comminit.com/materials/ma2005/materials-2034.html](http://www.comminit.com/materials/ma2005/materials-2034.html).
- Vaughan, P. W., E. M. Rogers, A. Singhal and R. M. Swalahe (2000) ‘Entertainment-Education and HIV/AIDS Prevention: A Field Experiment in Tanzania’ *Journal of Health Communication* Vol 5 (supplement) 81-100.

## Monitoring Tools

## 20. Most Significant Change (MSC)

The most significant change (MSC) technique is a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation. It is participatory because many project stakeholders are involved both in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded and in analysing the data. It is a form of monitoring because it occurs throughout the programme cycle and provides information to help people manage the programme. It contributes to evaluation because it provides data on impact and outcomes that can be used to help assess the performance of the programme as a whole.

### Description

Essentially, the process involves the collection of significant change (SC) stories emanating from the field level, and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. The designated staff and stakeholders are initially involved by ‘searching’ for project impact. Once changes have been captured, various people sit down together, read the stories aloud and have regular and often in-depth discussions about the value of these reported changes. When the technique is implemented successfully, whole teams of people begin to focus their attention on programme impact.

MSC has had several names since it was conceived with each emphasising a different aspect, e.g. ‘Monitoring-without-indicators’: MSC does not make use of pre-defined indicators, especially ones that have to be counted and measured; or the ‘story approach’: The answers to the central question about change are often in the form of stories of who did what, when and why – and the reasons why the event was important.

### Overview of implementation steps

MSC is an emerging technique, and many adaptations have already been made. These are discussed in Davies and Dart (2005). In sum, there are 10 steps:

1. How to start and raise interest
2. Defining the domains of change
3. Defining the reporting period
4. Collecting SC stories
5. Selecting the most significant of the stories
6. Feeding back the results of the selection process
7. Verification of stories
8. Quantification
9. Secondary analysis and meta-monitoring
10. Revising the system

### Description of process

- The first step in MSC generally involves introducing a range of stakeholders to MSC and fostering interest and commitment to participate. The next step is to identify the domains of change to be monitored. This involves selected stakeholders identifying broad domains – for example, ‘changes in people’s lives’ – that are not precisely defined like performance indicators, but are deliberately



left loose, to be defined by the actual users. The third step is to decide how frequently to monitor changes taking place in these domains.

- SC stories are collected from those most directly involved, such as participants and field staff. The stories are collected by asking a simple question such as: ‘During the last month, in your opinion, what was the most significant change that took place for participants in the program?’ It is initially up to respondents to allocate their stories to a domain category. In addition to this, respondents are encouraged to report why they consider a particular change to be the most significant one.
- The stories are then analysed and filtered up through the levels of authority typically found within an organisation or programme. Each level of the hierarchy reviews a series of stories sent to them by the level below and selects the single most significant account of change within each of the domains. Each group then sends the selected stories up to the next level of the programme hierarchy, and the number of stories is whittled down through a systematic and transparent process. Every time stories are selected, the criteria used to select them are recorded and fed back to all interested stakeholders, so that each subsequent round of story collection and selection is informed by feedback from previous rounds. The organisation is effectively recording and adjusting the direction of its attention – and the criteria it uses for valuing the events it sees there.
- After this process has been used for some time, such as a year, a document is produced with all stories selected at the uppermost organisational level over that period in each domain of change. The stories are accompanied by the reasons the stories were selected. The programme funders are asked to assess the stories in this document and select those that best represent the sort of outcomes they wish to fund. They are also asked to document the reasons for their choice. This information is fed back to project managers.
- The selected stories can then be verified by visiting the sites where the described events took place. The purpose of this is two-fold: to check that stories have been reported accurately and honestly, and to provide an opportunity to gather more detailed information about events seen as especially significant. If conducted some time after the event, a visit also offers a chance to see what has happened since the event was first documented.
- The next step is quantification, which can take place at two stages. When an account of change is first described, it is possible to include quantitative information as well as qualitative information. It is also possible to quantify the extent to which the most significant changes identified in one location have taken place in other locations within a specific period. The next step after quantification is monitoring the monitoring system itself, which can include looking at who participated and how they affected the contents, and analysing how often different types of changes are reported. The final step is to revise the design of the MSC process to take into account what has been learned as a direct result of using it and from analysing its use.

In sum, the kernel of the MSC process is a question along the lines of: ‘Looking back over the last month, what do you think was the most significant change in [particular domain of change]?’ A similar question is posed when the answers to the first question are examined by another group of participants: ‘From among all these significant changes, what do you think was the most significant change of all?’

## Source

- Davies, Rick and Jess Dart (2005) *The ‘Most Significant Change’ (MSC) Technique; A Guide to Its Use*, see: [www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf](http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf).

## Further resources

- MSC website and mailing list, see: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MostSignificantChanges>.

## 21. Outcome Mapping

Outcome mapping is an M&E tool developed by IDRC (see: [www.idrc.ca](http://www.idrc.ca)). It focuses on the following key words:

- *Behavioural change*: Outcomes are defined as changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organisations with whom a programme works directly. These outcomes can be logically linked to a programme's activities, although they are not necessarily directly caused by them.
- *Boundary partners*: Those individuals, groups, and organisations with whom the programme interacts directly and with whom the programme anticipates opportunities for influence. Most activities will involve multiple outcomes because they have multiple boundary partners.
- *Contributions*: By using Outcome Mapping, a programme is not claiming the achievement of development impacts; rather, the focus is on its contributions to outcomes. These outcomes, in turn, enhance the possibility of development impacts – but the relationship is not necessarily a direct one of cause and effect.

As development is essentially about people relating to each other and their environments, the focus of Outcome Mapping is on people. The originality of the methodology is its shift away from assessing the development impact of a programme (defined as changes in state – for example, policy relevance, poverty alleviation, or reduced conflict) and toward changes in the behaviours, relationships, actions or activities of the people, groups, and organisations with whom a development programme works directly. This shift significantly alters the way a programme understands its goals and assesses its performance and results. Outcome Mapping establishes a vision of the human, social, and environmental betterment to which the programme hopes to contribute and then focuses monitoring and evaluation on factors and actors within that programme's direct sphere of influence. The programme's contributions to development are planned and assessed based on its influence on the partners with whom it is working to effect change. At its essence, development is accomplished by, and for, people. Therefore, this is the central concept of Outcome Mapping. Outcome Mapping does not belittle the importance of changes in state (such as cleaner water or a stronger economy) but instead argues that for each change in state there are correlating changes in behaviour.

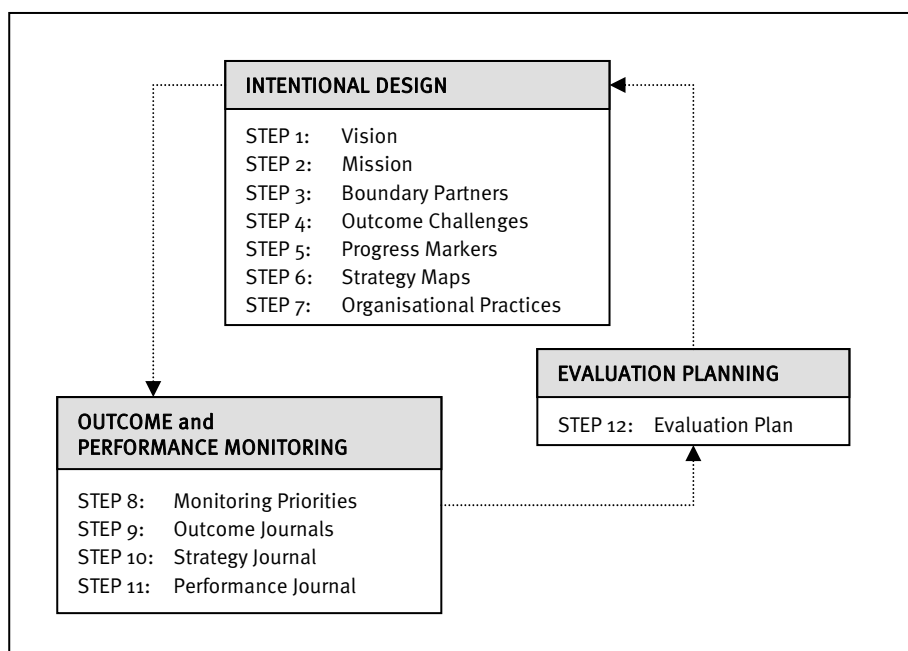
### An example

For example, a programme's objective may be to provide communities with access to cleaner water by installing purification filters. Traditionally, the method of evaluating the results of this programme would be to count the number of filters installed and measure changes in the level of contaminants in the water before and after the filters were installed. A focus on changes in behaviour begins instead from the premise that water does not remain clean without people being able to maintain its quality over time. The programme's outcomes are therefore evaluated in terms of whether those responsible for water purity in the communities not only have, but use, the appropriate tools, skills, and knowledge to monitor the contaminant levels, change filters, or bring in experts when required. Outcome Mapping provides a method for development programs to plan for and assess the capacities that they are helping to build in the people, groups, and organisations who will ultimately be responsible for improving the well-being of their communities. Outcome Mapping does not attempt to replace the more traditional forms of evaluation, which focus on changes in conditions or in the state of well-being. Instead, Outcome Mapping supplements other forms of evaluation by focusing specifically on related behavioural change.

## The three stages of Outcome Mapping

1. The first stage, Intentional Design, helps a programme establish consensus on the macro level changes it will help to bring about and plan the strategies it will use. It helps answer four questions: Why? (What is the vision to which the programme wants to contribute?); Who? (Who are the programme's boundary partners?); What? (What are the changes that are being sought?); and How? (How will the programme contribute to the change process?).
2. The second stage, Outcome and Performance Monitoring, provides a framework for the ongoing monitoring of the programme's actions and the boundary partners' progress toward the achievement of outcomes. It is based largely on systematised self-assessment. It provides the following data collection tools for elements identified in the Intentional Design stage: an 'Outcome Journal' (progress markers); a 'Strategy Journal' (strategy maps); and a 'Performance Journal' (organisational practices).
3. The third stage, Evaluation Planning, helps the programme identify evaluation priorities and develop an evaluation plan. Figure 7 illustrates the three stages of Outcome Mapping.

**Figure 7: The three stages of Outcome Mapping**



The process for identifying the macro-level changes and designing the monitoring framework and evaluation plan is intended to be participatory and, wherever feasible, can involve the full range of stakeholders, including boundary partners. Outcome Mapping is based on principles of participation and purposefully includes those implementing the programme in the design and data collection so as to encourage ownership and use of findings. It is intended to be used as a consciousness-raising, consensus-building, and empowerment tool for those working directly in the development program.

Outcome Mapping introduces monitoring and evaluation considerations at the planning stage of a program. Outcome Mapping moves away from the notion that monitoring and evaluation are done to a program, and, instead, actively engages the team in the design of a monitoring framework and evaluation plan and promotes self-assessment.

## **Source**

- Earl, Sarah, Fred Carden and Terry Smutylo (2001) *Outcome Mapping; Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), see: [www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html).

## 22. Researcher Checklist

Effective use of research has the potential to improve public policy, enhance public services and contribute to the quality of public debate. Further, knowledge of when and how funded research makes a difference should enable research funders to make better decisions about how and where they allocate research funds. At the same time it is important that non-instrumental social and economic research is also valued and supported. The routes and mechanisms through which research is communicated to places where it can make a difference are many and varied. The ways in which research is then used are also complex and multifaceted. For example, research may directly influence changes in policy, practices and behaviour. Or it may, in more subtle ways, change people's knowledge, understanding and attitudes towards social issues. Tracking these subtle changes is difficult, but is perhaps more important in the long run.

The RURU report of an ESRC symposium on assessing the non-academic impact of research addresses these issues. It lays out the reasons why we might want to examine the difference that research can make. It then explores different ways of approaching this problem, outlining the core issues and choices that arise when seeking to assess research impact. A wide range of key questions are raised in the paper, and consideration of these should help those wishing to develop work in this area. An aide-memoire for impact assessors is outlined below.

### Initial questions for consideration when designing impact assessment

- Who are the key stakeholders for research impact assessments, and why do they want information assessing specifically the non-academic impacts of research?
- Is assessment for summative or formative purposes? How will the information gleaned feed into decision-making?
- Will any impact assessment be primarily for learning (hence examinations of process may need to be emphasised)? Or will the assessment be primarily to enable judgements to be made (hence examinations of output and outcomes will necessarily be privileged)?
- Will the dominant mode of assessment be quantitative or qualitative – and what are the implications of this?
- For any programme of research work, what impacts are desired, expected, or reasonable, and can impact assessments be framed in the light of these expectations?
- Should all research have identifiable impacts? What about the notion that individual studies should primarily feed into other academic work or into research synthesis?

### Questions arising from more nuanced concepts of research use

- What types of research use/impacts are of most interest (e.g. instrumental or conceptual; immediate or longer-term)? And what steps can be taken to guard against a bias towards privileging those impacts that are most instrumental, up-front and readily identifiable?
- What settings for (potential) research use are to be examined? Who are the actual and potential research users? Can we identify them all, even tracking through unexpected avenues of diffusion?
- What are the implications of casting the net close or wide when assessing potential impacts?
- Assessing impacts on policy choices may be especially problematic as research that feeds into policy choices is often synthesised, integrated with other research/knowledge/expert opinion, and digested. How will this be addressed?

- In such complex circumstances, how can we disentangle the specific impacts of research, pay attention to non-linearity of effects, address issues of attribution, and identify the additionality of any research contribution?

### **Further questions arising from a consideration of research use models**

- Are we interested primarily in outputs (what is produced by the research), impact processes (how research outputs are used), impacts per se (the initial consequences of research use in various decision arenas), or outcomes (the subsequent consequences of changes in decision arenas for clients or public)?
- Can we identify research usage at the individual, organisational and system level?
- Can we track all types of research impact, both expected and unexpected?
- Should we try to identify and examine unintended and/or dysfunctional impacts, such as the misuse of research?
- How will we access the hidden or tacit use of research?

### **Questions to ask that acknowledge the importance of context**

- Should impacts be assessed in the absence of initiatives to increase research uptake, or only in tandem with known effective approaches?
- Should we judge/value research on its actual or on its potential impacts?
- How can we take into account the receptivity of context, not just in terms of the concomitant strategies used to increase uptake but also in terms of the political acceptability of findings or propitiousness of message/timing?
- In making judgements about impacts, how can we acknowledge the role played by serendipity and the opening up of windows of opportunity?

### **Further questions that reflect key methodological choices**

- What are the relative advantages/disadvantages of tracking forwards from research to impacts, or backwards from change to antecedent research?
- Research impacts may be far removed temporally from the source research – so when should impacts be assessed? What timeframes are most appropriate given the competing pressures of leaving it long enough so that impacts can reasonably occur, but not so long that the trail traversed by the research goes cold?
- How can we balance qualitative descriptions and subjective assessments of impacts with quantitative and more objective measures?
- When does scoring the extent of impacts become a useful tool, and what are its potential dangers?
- How can we aggregate across different sorts of impact?
- How can (or indeed, should) impacts be valued?

### **Strategic questions for impact assessors**

- How can we draw policy implications from impact assessments?
- What are the resource implications of carrying out impact assessments? How will we know what level of investment in impact assessment is worth it?

- Could the need to demonstrate 'impact' influence funding bodies so that they alter priorities or even the nature of funded research?
- Will knowledge of the role of impact assessments by researchers influence the nature of the questions posed and methods applied, e.g. to ensure production of readily absorbed 'policy messages' that challenge little but can readily be tracked through to impact?
- Will the processes of impact assessment introduce new incentives/changed behaviours into the system: for gaming; misrepresentation, etc.? For example, will savvy researchers begin to employ not just professional communicators but also media relations consultants?
- Will our systems of impact assessment be subtle enough to identify and discount inappropriate impacts, e.g. the tactical use of research deployed in support of pre-existing views; inappropriate application of findings beyond their realm of applicability; 'halo' effects of famous studies being cited without real purpose etc.?

## **Source**

- Davies, Huw, Sandra Nutley and Isabel Walter (2005) 'Approaches to assessing the non-academic impact of social science research', Report of the ESRC Symposium on Assessing the Non-academic Impact of Research 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> May 2005, Research Unit for Research Utilisation (RURU), University of St Andrews, (see: [www.ruru.ac.uk](http://www.ruru.ac.uk)).

## 23. CFSC Integrated Model

The integrated monitoring model of Communication for Social Change (CFSC), at Johns Hopkins University's Center for Communication Programs (JHU CCP) (see: [www.jhuccp.org](http://www.jhuccp.org)), describes an iterative process where 'community dialogue' and 'collective action' work together to produce social change in a community that improves the health and welfare of all of its members. It builds on several key concepts outlined below.

### **Integrated**

It is an integrated model that draws from a broad literature on development communication developed since the early 1960s. In particular, the work of Latin American theorists and communication activists was used for its clarity and rich recommendations for a more people-inclusive, integrated approach of using communication for development. Likewise, theories of group dynamics, conflict resolution, leadership, quality improvement and future search, as well as the network/convergence theory of communication, have been used to develop the model.

### **Relational**

For social change, a model of communication is required that is cyclical, relational and leads to an outcome of mutual change rather than one-sided, individual change. In Section 1 of Figueroa et al's (2002) report provides a description of such a model. The model describes a dynamic, iterative process that starts with a 'catalyst/stimulus' that can be external or internal to the community. This catalyst leads to dialogue within the community that when effective, leads to collective action and the resolution of a common problem.

### **Dialogue**

The catalyst in the model represents the particular trigger that initiates the community dialogue about a specific issue of concern or interest to the community. This catalyst is a missing piece in most of the literature about development communication, which often assumes that the community spontaneously initiates dialogue and action. The model describes Community Dialogue and Action as a sequential process or series of steps that can take place within the community, some of them simultaneously, and which lead to the solution of a common problem. Section 2 of the report includes a set of key indicators to measure the process of community dialogue and collective action.

### **Outcome indicators**

Seven outcome indicators of social change are proposed:

- Leadership
- Degree and equity of participation
- Information equity
- Collective self-efficacy
- Sense of ownership
- Social cohesion
- Social norms



Taken together, these outcomes determine the capacity for cooperative action in a community. The model also describes a learning process, which increases the community's overall capacity for future collective action, and increases its belief in, and value for, continual improvement.

## Outcome measurements

The proposed list of indicators is a work in progress and includes different types of measurements given the range of levels of analysis that can be conducted. Four types of measurements are included:

- Dichotomous (yes/no) measures
- Word scales (Likert-type)
- Numerical scales
- Qualitative assessments

The first three types of measures can be computed to yield proportions and averages.

## Potential users of the integrated model

The introduction to Section 2 also addresses the question of who uses the model for evaluation and for what purposes. We suggest that three different groups can conduct the assessment and evaluation of the process and its outcomes:

- Members of the community who want to know how well their effort has achieved the objectives they set for themselves and would like to share the results with the rest of the community;
- External change agents involved in the process who need to document how well a community has performed to inform governments, funding agencies and the community; and
- Social scientists who want to conduct a systematic analysis of the relationship between the process and its outcomes across a sample of communities, to share with practitioners as well as other scholars.

The distinctions made across the three types of evaluators reflect the difference in goals that each one has, and these differences also determine which indicators are used, the methods for collecting them and how they are reported. For example, at the level of the community the yes/no type of measurement and some proportions may be the recommended and most-appropriate measures, together with some qualitative self-assessments. It is important to emphasise that this type of self-evaluation (by the community) is central to the participatory development communication. In practice, self-evaluation is often skipped over, especially when projects are initiated by outside agents who hold a limited notion of evaluation or an anti-participatory ideology. The communication for social-change model explicitly incorporates participatory evaluation into the process itself rather than leaving it entirely for others to do at some other time.

## Ongoing record keeping

Section 2 of the report also includes a set of two matrices that can be used to keep a record, by the community, the change agent or anyone interested, of each stage of the Community Dialogue and Action process. Each matrix documents whether the step was undertaken, who participated, whether there was any conflict or disagreement, the way in which it was resolved and the outcome of each step. A suggested analysis of these data is also included in Section 2. The matrices also include a space to document the forces that enable or hinder the social-change process.

## **Source**

- Figueroa, Maria Elena, D. Lawrence Kincaid, Manju Rani, Gary Lewis (with a foreword by Denise Gray-Felder) (2002) 'Communication for Social Change: An Integrated Model for Measuring the Process and Its Outcomes', *Communication for Social Change Working Paper Series No. 1*, Johns Hopkins University's Center for Communication Programs (JHU CCP) see: [www.comminit.com/evaluations/stcfscindicators/sld-1500.html](http://www.comminit.com/evaluations/stcfscindicators/sld-1500.html) or [www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/socialchange.pdf](http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/pdf/socialchange.pdf).

## **Further resources**

- Dagon, Alfonso Gumucio (2001) *Making Waves: Stories of Participatory Communication for Social Change*. New York: Rockefeller Foundation.

## Bibliography: Essential reading

- Church, Madeline, Mark Bitel, Kathleen Armstrong, Priyanthi Fernando, Helen Gould, Sally Joss, Manisha Marwaha-Diedrich, Ana Laura de la Torre and Claudy Vouhé (2003) *Participation, Relationships and Dynamic Change: New Thinking on Evaluating the Work of International Networks*, *DPU Working Paper* 121. London: Development Planning Unit, University College London.
- Coe, Jim, Mark Luetchford and Tess Kingham (2002) *id21: tracking routes towards impact*. UK: id21, see: [www.id21.org/id21-info/impact.html](http://www.id21.org/id21-info/impact.html).
- Lloyd-Laney, Megan (2003) *Making Information User-Driven*. Wallingford, UK: Communication and Information Management Resource Centre, see: [www.cimrc.info](http://www.cimrc.info).
- Mortimore, Michael and Mary Tiffen (2003) 'Promoting research-policy dialogues: Lessons from four studies of dryland development in Sub-Saharan Africa'. *Drylands Research Working Paper* 41. Crewkerne Somerset: Drylands Research, see: [www.drylandsresearch.org.uk/pdfs/WP41\\_Research\\_policy.pdf](http://www.drylandsresearch.org.uk/pdfs/WP41_Research_policy.pdf)
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- Phillpott, Anne (1999) *Twists in the Mwanza tale: Did one HIV research study shift global policy? Insights* 32, see: [www.id21.org/insights/insights32/index.html](http://www.id21.org/insights/insights32/index.html).
- RAWOO (2001) 'Utilisation of Research for Development Cooperation: Linking Knowledge Production to Development Policy and Practice', *RAWOO Publication* 21. The Hague: Netherlands Development Assistance Research Council (RAWOO), see: [www.rawoo.nl/pdf/rawoo21.pdf](http://www.rawoo.nl/pdf/rawoo21.pdf).
- Scott, Alister (2003) 'Research and Policy Development', *POSTnote*. London: Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (draft report, longer version available at: [www.parliament.uk/post/e10.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/post/e10.pdf)).
- Surr, Martin, Andrew Barnett, Alex Duncan, Melanie Speight, David Bradley, Alan Rew and John Teye (2002) *Research for Poverty Reduction: DFID Research Policy Paper*. London: Department for International Development, UK.
- UNAIDS (1999) *Communications framework for HIV/AIDS: A new direction*. Joint United National Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and Pennsylvania State University.
- Walter, Isabel, Sandra Nutley and Huw Davies (2003) *Developing a Taxonomy of Interventions Used to Increase the Impact of Research*. St Andrews, UK: Research Unit for Research Utilisation, University of St Andrews, part of the ESRC Network for Evidence Based Policy and Practice, see: [www.ruru.ac.uk/PDFs/Taxonomy%20development%20paper%20070103.pdf](http://www.ruru.ac.uk/PDFs/Taxonomy%20development%20paper%20070103.pdf)

## Resources: Organisations and Websites

Organisation (or author)	Title of resource, publication or tool /type Author (date) Reference or source	Comments, annotations
<b>ActionAid</b>	<a href="http://www.actionaid.org.uk">www.actionaid.org.uk</a>	Conducted a study of advocacy from 2001-2003, focusing on empowerment. The early report of this study (on website) contains a model from Ros David (1998), which shows eight ways to influence a minister. Interestingly, one of these is 'good research', but the rest all relate to building links and applying political pressure. ActionAid puts strong emphasis on evaluating impact at the level of the end-user in the South, rather than in terms of policy or attitude change in the North.
<b>Adam Smith International</b>	<a href="http://www.adamsmithinternational.com/services_eur_cpa.html">www.adamsmithinternational.com/services_eur_cpa.html</a>  Masty, Stephen and Matthew Uzzell (n.d.) <i>Development Communications; Key Strategies and Techniques</i> , <a href="http://www.adamsmithinternational.com/pdf/ASI_Dev.pdf">www.adamsmithinternational.com/pdf/ASI_Dev.pdf</a>	Provides links to view extracts from a selection of ASI's recent communications documentaries.
<b>ADBI (Asian Development Bank Institute)</b>	Using the Internet for Advocacy and Research <a href="http://www.adbi.org/email.notification/url.php?id=294&amp;url=%2Fcdrom-review%2F2005%2F07%2F29%2F1263.internet.advocacy.research">www.adbi.org/email.notification/url.php?id=294&amp;url=%2Fcdrom-review%2F2005%2F07%2F29%2F1263.internet.advocacy.research</a>  <a href="http://www.adbi.org/cdrom-review/2005/07/29/1263.internet.advocacy.research/">www.adbi.org/cdrom-review/2005/07/29/1263.internet.advocacy.research/</a>	
<b>AlertNet</b>	<a href="http://www.alertnet.org/inthepress.htm">www.alertnet.org/inthepress.htm</a>	Development stories, updated daily.
<b>ALIN (Arid Lands Information Network)</b>	<a href="http://www.alin.or.ke">www.alin.or.ke</a>	Baobab magazine.
<b>Bellanet</b>	<a href="http://www.bellanet.org">www.bellanet.org</a>	Online communities; knowledge sharing; blogging.
<b>BOND (British Overseas NGOs for Development)</b>	<a href="http://www.bond.org.uk">www.bond.org.uk</a>	Guidance notes on advocacy (definition: 'advocacy is the process of using information strategically to change policies that affect the lives of disadvantaged people'), and much more.
<b>CBNRM Net (Community-Based Natural Resource Management Network)</b>	<a href="http://www.cbnrm.net">www.cbnrm.net</a>	A global network/community of practice.

<b>CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)</b>	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/communication/cdcynergy.htm">www.cdc.gov/communication/cdcynergy.htm</a>	Have developed a tool called CDCynergy. 'CDCynergy is a multimedia CD-ROM used for planning, managing, and evaluating public health communication programs. This innovative tool is used to guide and assist users in designing health communication interventions within a public health framework.'
<b>CIIR (Catholic Institute for International Relations)</b>	Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) and International Cooperation for Development (ICD): <i>Capacity Building for Local NGOs; Guidance Manual for Good Practice</i> Download the free manual in PDF format at <a href="http://www.ciir.org/Templates/System/Basket.asp?NodeID=91675">www.ciir.org/Templates/System/Basket.asp?NodeID=91675</a> Also available free of charge on CD-Rom by e-mailing CIIR Publications at <a href="mailto:sales@ciir.org">sales@ciir.org</a> .	This comprehensive manual on capacity building for local NGOs can be used by trainers and development workers or by local NGOs in developing countries as a self-help manual. The manual was developed from practical capacity building work with organisations in Somaliland. It includes examples and exercises for users to work through. It should prove to be a valuable aid to organisations and individuals working in capacity building in developing countries – and to local NGOs seeking guidance on how to effectively set and achieve their objectives.
<b>CIMRC (Communication and Information Management Resource Centre)</b>	<a href="http://www.cimrc.info">www.cimrc.info</a>	Resources on communication, infomediaries, information use, evaluation, etc.
<b>Citizen Science Toolbox</b>	<a href="http://www.coastal.crc.org.au/toolbox/index.asp">www.coastal.crc.org.au/toolbox/index.asp</a>	'Linking communities, scientists and decision-makers. The Citizen Science Toolbox is a free resource of principles and strategies to enhance meaningful stakeholder involvement in decision-making.' List of tools and case studies.
<b>Civiblog</b>	<a href="http://www.civiblog.org">www.civiblog.org</a>	A resource for those doing civil society work and wanting a free, hosted blog platform with the ability to aggregate with other related blogs.
<b>Civicus</b>	'Campaigning Toolkit for Civil Society Organisations engaged in the Millennium Development Goals' <a href="http://www.civicus.org/mdg/title.htm">www.civicus.org/mdg/title.htm</a>	Links to speeches, articles and statements by Kumi Naidoo talking about the rise of civil society. Naidoo argues that international organisations are dangerously unaccountable and that in this sense CSOs play a very important role in representing the voices of marginalised people across the world.
<b>Communication Initiative</b>	<a href="http://www.comminit.com">www.comminit.com</a>	One of the most comprehensive sites on communication for development that exists. Resources, links, information, updates, and much more.
<b>Communication for Social Change Consortium</b>	<a href="http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org">www.communicationforsocialchange.org</a>	'Our goal is to build local capacity of people living in poor and marginalised communities to use communication in order to improve their own lives.' Many interesting publications.
<b>CRIS (Communication Rights in the Information Society)</b>	<a href="http://www.crisinfo.org">www.crisinfo.org</a>	A campaign to ensure that communication rights are central to the information society and to the upcoming World Summit to the Information Society (WSIS). The campaign is sponsored and supported by the Platform for Communication Rights, a group of NGOs involved in media and communication projects around the world.

<b>Danida</b>	Danida has developed a new homepage on 'Good ICT Practice in Development Activities' <a href="http://www.goodictpractices.dk">www.goodictpractices.dk</a>	
<b>DFID (UK Department for International Development)</b>	Myers, Mary: 'Evaluation Guidelines for DFID' <a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk">www.dfid.gov.uk</a>  CommsConsult: 'Best Practice Communications Toolkit' <a href="http://www.dfid.gov.uk">www.dfid.gov.uk</a>	
<b>ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council)</b>	Communications toolkit: <a href="http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Support/Communications%5FToolkit">www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Support/Communications%5FToolkit</a>  Media toolkit: <a href="http://www.esrc.ac.uk/commstoolkit/media.asp">www.esrc.ac.uk/commstoolkit/media.asp</a>  'Heroes of dissemination' booklet: <a href="http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/about/CI/CP/best_practice_guides/heroes_of_dissemination/index.aspx">www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/about/CI/CP/best_practice_guides/heroes_of_dissemination/index.aspx</a>	
<b>EU (European Union)</b>	Good practice guide: <a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2004/cer2004/pdf/rtd_2004_guide_success_communication.pdf">http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2004/cer2004/pdf/rtd_2004_guide_success_communication.pdf</a>	The EU FP6 programme has released a good practice guide to communicating research results – dissemination is a contractual obligation in their research initiatives. The guide does have some useful new angles, particularly in external dissemination resources (for example <a href="http://www.research-tv.com">www.research-tv.com</a> ).
<b>Exchange</b>	<a href="http://www.healthcomms.org">www.healthcomms.org</a>	Exchange is a networking and learning programme that promotes effective health communication. A recent external review of the programme concluded that 'Exchange has established itself as a leader in the field of health communication and as a credible source of information and expertise.'
<b>FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN)</b>	FAO and IDRC: Communication for Development: A Medium for Innovation in Natural Resource Management (by Ricardo Ramírez and Wendy Quarry, 2004) <a href="http://www.comminit.com/strategicthinking/st2004/thinking-925.html">www.comminit.com/strategicthinking/st2004/thinking-925.html</a> (summary)	Stories and examples of the experience of people and projects worldwide where communication methods and approaches have been applied to address natural resource management problems.
<b>FPRI (Foreign Policy and Research Institute)</b>	Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program <a href="http://www.fpri.org/research/thinktanks">www.fpri.org/research/thinktanks</a>	
<b>GAINS (Ghana Agricultural Information Network System)</b>	<a href="http://www.gains.org.gh">www.gains.org.gh</a>	GAINS was established as a component of the Government of Ghana/ World Bank-supported National Agricultural Research Project (NARP) in 1991. The goal of GAINS is to establish a coordinated network system that seeks to collect, process, share, and repackage for dissemination, agricultural information generated in Ghana or elsewhere.

<b>GDN (Global Development Network)</b>	GDN Toolkit: Disseminating Research Online <a href="http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=373">www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=373</a>	Some practical suggestions on online dissemination.
<b>Greenpeace</b>	<a href="http://www.greenpeace.org">www.greenpeace.org</a>	Established on a tradition of 'bearing witness', the website states: 'we exist to expose environmental criminals'. It has a scientific research centre based at Exeter University.
<b>IAMCR (International Association for Media and Communication Research)</b>	<a href="http://www.iamcr.net">www.iamcr.net</a>	Comprehensive site with contacts, news, announcements, resources. President: Robin Mansell (LSE).
<b>IDRC (International Development Research Centre)</b>	Dissemination of results: <a href="http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-45523-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html">http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-45523-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html</a>  Outcome Mapping: <a href="http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html">http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html</a>	
<b>IDS (Institute of Development Studies)</b>	<a href="http://www.ids.ac.uk">www.ids.ac.uk</a>  Information Services (including id21): <a href="http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/info/index.html">www.ids.ac.uk/ids/info/index.html</a>	
<b>IFEX (International Freedom of Expression eXchange)</b>	Campaigning for Free Expression: A Handbook for Advocates <a href="http://www.ifex.org/download/en/IFEXCampaignHandbook.pdf">www.ifex.org/download/en/IFEXCampaignHandbook.pdf</a>	Aimed at equipping human rights activists around the world with essential tools to campaign more effectively for freedom of expression and press freedom.
<b>IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute)</b>	Von Grebmer, K, S Babu, V Rhoe and M Rubinstein (2005) Communicating Food Policy Research: A Guidebook: <a href="http://www.ifpri.org/training/material/miscellaneous/Foodpolicycom/Module_web.pdf">www.ifpri.org/training/material/miscellaneous/Foodpolicycom/Module_web.pdf</a>	Aims to help researchers enhance their communication skills, including making presentations at conferences, using PowerPoint, running in-house seminars, and communicating one-on-one with government.
<b>IICD (International Institute for Communication and Development)</b>	M&E tool for online surveys <a href="http://www.iicd.org/articles/iicdnews.2005-05-09.8711099501">www.iicd.org/articles/iicdnews.2005-05-09.8711099501</a>	Offers an open source M&E tool for internet-based surveys, using software package WebEnq version 3 (but no need to download software). Light and easy to use management interface. Specifically designed for CSOs in the South.
<b>IIED (International Institute for Environment and Development)</b>	<a href="http://www.iied.org">www.iied.org</a> IIED's Power Tools: For policy influence in natural resource management <a href="http://www.policy-powertools.org">www.policy-powertools.org</a>	

<b>INTRAC (International NGO Training and Research Centre)</b>	<a href="http://www.intrac.org">www.intrac.org</a>	Publications and training courses on participatory M&E, advocacy and policy influencing, supporting Southern advocacy, capacity building, strategic thinking, organisational leadership, managing organisational change, civil society strengthening, power and partnerships, impact assessment, and more.
<b>Itrain Online</b>	Knowledge Share Toolkit: <a href="http://tinyurl.com/415k3">http://tinyurl.com/415k3</a>	'Simple, quick, and proven to be effective methods for providing and promoting open, transparent discussion on topics, issues, activities and projects, and can be effectively used as training/facilitation techniques for workshops.'
<b>IWPR (Institute for War and Peace Reporting)</b>	Reporting for Change: A Handbook for Local Journalists in Crisis Areas (by C Bickler et al): <a href="http://www.iwpr.net/special_index1.html">www.iwpr.net/special_index1.html</a>	A practical, hands-on manual to help local journalists contribute to positive change in societies undergoing major crises.
<b>Johns Hopkins University: Centre for Communications Programmes (JHU CCP)</b>	<a href="http://www.jhuccp.org">www.jhuccp.org</a>	A major global programme in health communication. CCP partners with organisations worldwide to design and implement strategic communication programs that influence political dialogue, collective action, and individual behavior; enhance access to information and the exchange of knowledge that improve health and health care; and conduct research to guide programme design, evaluate impact, test theories, and advance knowledge in health communication.
<b>Jubilee Research</b>	<a href="http://www.jubilee2000uk.org">www.jubilee2000uk.org</a>	Distilling, analysing and de-mystifying economic concepts and information and communicating in ways easily understood by campaigners. Jubilee Research is part of NEF (New Economics Foundation, London), a 'think-and-do' tank.
<b>KFPE (Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries)</b>	Impact study: <a href="http://www.kfpe.ch/download/KFPE_ImpactStudy-final.pdf">www.kfpe.ch/download/KFPE_ImpactStudy-final.pdf</a>	Case studies encompassing a wide variety of North-South research partnerships. Focuses on potential impacts, specifically 'attitudinal changes', impacts on capacity strengthening, and impacts on society or on decision-makers.
<b>KM4DEV</b>	<a href="http://www.km4dev.org/index.php">www.km4dev.org/index.php</a>	Knowledge Management for Development resources. Comprehensive lists including documents, workshops and links.
<b>LEAP IMPACT</b>	'Smart tools': <a href="http://www.dgroups.org/groups/leap/impact">www.dgroups.org/groups/leap/impact</a>	Online toolkit with 22 tools focusing on self-assessment. Aims to improve the institutional performance of monitoring and evaluation practice related to information services, information products and information projects.
<b>Learning South West</b>	<a href="http://www.learning-southwest.org.uk">www.learning-southwest.org.uk</a>	A membership organisation working to support the Learning and Skills Sectors across the South-West of England. Interesting work on communication and advocacy.
<b>Livelihoods Connect</b>	<a href="http://www.livelihoods.org">www.livelihoods.org</a>	Aims to enable the practical implementation of the sustainable livelihoods approach through information sharing, learning, and management tools. The website gives access to a 'Toolbox' of documents and training materials.



<b>Lulu</b>	<a href="http://www.lulu.com">www.lulu.com</a>	Offers free publishing – could be particularly useful for small research centres in developing countries.
<b>Mande</b>	<a href="http://www.mande.co.uk">www.mande.co.uk</a>	A news service focusing on developments in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methods relevant to development projects and programmes with social development objectives. Comprehensive resource.
<b>MARTUS: The Global Social Justice Monitoring System</b>	<a href="http://www.martus.org">www.martus.org</a>	‘Martus – Greek for witness – is an innovative open source technology tool and support network which enables grassroots NGOs to securely document social justice violations and store their records on off-site servers with easy-to-use software, preserving crucial evidence for investigation, research, and prosecutions.’
<b>Media Trust</b>	The Media Trust Online Guides <a href="http://www.mediatrust.org/online_guides/index.html">www.mediatrust.org/online_guides/index.html</a>	Guide sheets to PR, communications, lobbying, marketing, media, design, and website.
<b>MOST</b>	<a href="http://www.unesco.org/most">www.unesco.org/most</a>	MOST is a UNESCO programme that fosters and promotes social science research. Its objective is to produce reliable and relevant knowledge for policymakers. The website functions as a clearing house of best practices. It aims to become a one-stop shop for policymakers wanting to know what best practice in their policy field is.
<b>NCC (National Council of Churches), USA</b>	<a href="http://www.ncccusa.org/about/comcompolicies.html#media-education">www.ncccusa.org/about/comcompolicies.html#media-education</a>	The Church and the Media (by the Communication Commission of NCC) addresses what congregations might do to focus attention on the interaction of media, justice, violence and the church’s role in communication advocacy and media education.
<b>NERC (Natural Environment Research Council)</b>	Faith Culshaw and Helen Clayton (2005) <i>Science into Policy: Taking Part in the Process</i> <a href="http://www.nerc.ac.uk/publications/corporate/documents/science-into-policy.pdf">www.nerc.ac.uk/publications/corporate/documents/science-into-policy.pdf</a>	Clear and useful handbook on how to promote the use of science in policy, including sections on government and parliament.
<b>OURMedia</b>	<a href="http://www.ourmedianet.org">www.ourmedianet.org</a>	A global network of activists, academics, and practitioners working toward stronger alternative, community and citizens' media. For example, the OURMedia III conference included a panel on evaluation of citizen’s media.
<b>Panos</b>	<a href="http://www.panos.org.uk">www.panos.org.uk</a>	PANOS London works with journalists in developing countries to produce news, features and analysis about the most critical global issues of today. Panos’ job is to make the immensely complex issues facing developing countries accessible and understandable, to provide information that people can trust, and to open up opportunities for different perspectives to be heard.
<b>Policy Hub</b>	Policy tools: <a href="http://www.policyhub.gov.uk/policy_tools">www.policyhub.gov.uk/policy_tools</a>	Practical online resources, aiming to help you access and make the best use of evidence in the development and evaluation of policy. Useful links.
<b>Power Tools</b>	IIED’s Power Tools: <a href="http://www.policy-powertools.org">www.policy-powertools.org</a>	A compendium of guidance materials on approaches and tactics for policy influence by natural resource managers.

<b>PRB (Population Reference Bureau)</b>	Using the internet to disseminate info: <a href="http://www.prb.org/pdf04/UsingInternetDissemInfo.pdf">www.prb.org/pdf04/UsingInternetDissemInfo.pdf</a>	Useful guide.
<b>RAIN (Regional Agricultural Informational Network)</b>	<a href="http://www.asareca.org/rain">www.asareca.org/rain</a>	RAIN is a network of agricultural information organisations and professionals operating in ten countries in Eastern and Central Africa. Its objective is to enhance utilisation of information for regional agricultural research and development.
<b>SAIEA (Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment)</b>	<a href="http://www.saiea.com/calabash/index.html">www.saiea.com/calabash/index.html</a>	Increasing the effectiveness and ability of civil society to participate in environmental decision-making and governance. Outputs developed so far include civil society engagement tools from around the world.
<b>SARPN (Southern African Regional Poverty Network)</b>	<a href="http://www.sarpn.org.za">www.sarpn.org.za</a>	'Connecting people, ideas and information to fight poverty.' Comprehensive website with updated news.
<b>SciDev</b>	<a href="http://www.scidev.net">www.scidev.net</a>  Dossier on Research and Development policy: <a href="http://www.scidev.net/randd">www.scidev.net/randd</a>	'News, views and information about science, technology and the developing world.' Comprehensive resource.
<b>Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future</b>	<a href="http://www.stakeholderforum.org">www.stakeholderforum.org</a>  <i>How to Lobby at Intergovernmental Meetings (2004)</i> , by Felix Dodds: <a href="http://www.stakeholderforum.org/publications/books/lobby.php">www.stakeholderforum.org/publications/books/lobby.php</a>	A guide on how to participate and be heard at intergovernmental meetings, including preparation and presentation of ideas, the consultation and negotiating process, and practical and logistical matters.
<b>UN Roundtable on Communication for Development</b>	<a href="http://www.fao.org/sd/dim_kn1/kn1_040701a_en.htm">www.fao.org/sd/dim_kn1/kn1_040701a_en.htm</a>	The Roundtable in September 2004 reiterated the commonly agreed principles for communication for development and began drafting a plan of action. Advocacy for Communication for Development was high on the agenda for collaborative follow-up activities.
<b>University of Central Lancashire</b>	MA Strategic Communication: <a href="http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/lbs/courses/factsheets/postgradfultimeo6/StratComm.pdf">www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/lbs/courses/factsheets/postgradfultimeo6/StratComm.pdf</a>  MSc International Applied Communication: <a href="http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/lbs/courses/factsheets/postgradfultimeo6/AppliedConns.pdf">www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/lbs/courses/factsheets/postgradfultimeo6/AppliedConns.pdf</a>	

<b>University of Oklahoma</b>	Department of Communication: <a href="http://www.ou.edu/deptcomm">www.ou.edu/deptcomm</a>	Includes intercultural communication.
<b>University of Reading</b>	MSc Communication for Development: <a href="http://www.rdg.ac.uk/irdd/ma8-CSL.htm">www.rdg.ac.uk/irdd/ma8-CSL.htm</a>	
<b>USAID</b>	USAID (2001) <i>Supporting Civic Advocacy: strategic approaches for donor-supported civic advocacy programs</i> : <a href="http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/countries/ge/advocacydfto71201.doc">www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/countries/ge/advocacydfto71201.doc</a>	Includes a number of CSO advocacy tools.
<b>Volunteers for Africa</b>	<a href="http://www.vfa.8m.net">www.vfa.8m.net</a>	One of the objectives of this NGO is community-based systems in ICT.
<b>WB (World Bank)</b>	Capacity Development Resource Center <a href="http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTCDRC/o..menuPK:64169181~pagePK:64169192~piPK:64169180~theSitePK:489952,00.html">http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTCDRC/o..menuPK:64169181~pagePK:64169192~piPK:64169180~theSitePK:489952,00.html</a>  The Development Communication Division (DevComm) <a href="http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEVCOMMENG/o,,menuPK:34000201~pagePK:34000189~piPK:34000199~theSitePK:423815,00.html">http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTDEVCOMMENG/o,,menuPK:34000201~pagePK:34000189~piPK:34000199~theSitePK:423815,00.html</a>	The Capacity Development Resource Center provides case studies, lessons learned, 'how to' approaches, and good practices pertaining to capacity development.  DevComm is a team of experts in the field of strategic communication – including socio-political analysis, social science research, social marketing, message development, political risk analysis, strategy development, consensus-building, civil society participation, media relations, and capacity-building.
<b>WCCD (World Congress on Communication for Development)</b>	15-17 March 2006, Rome <a href="http://www.cominit.com/events_calendar/2006-events/events-3934.html">www.cominit.com/events_calendar/2006-events/events-3934.html</a>	This international event is organised by the World Bank's Development Communication Division, FAO, and The Communication Initiative. The WCCD will focus on demonstrating that communication for development is an essential ingredient for meeting today's most pressing development challenges and, as such, should be more fully integrated in development policy and practice.
<b>WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society)</b>	10-12 December 2003, Geneva. 16-18 November 2005, Tunis. <a href="http://www.itu.int/wsis">www.itu.int/wsis</a>	WSIS is held in two phases. The first phase took place in Geneva, hosted by the Government of Switzerland, from 10-12 December 2003, where 175 countries adopted a Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action. The second phase takes place in Tunis, hosted by the Government of Tunisia, from 16-18 November 2005.

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- **Do you know what I know?** *Ben Ramalingam*, *Developments*, Issue 29, April 2005
- **Researchers and NGOs: Working Together**, *Simon Maxwell and Julius Court*, UK feature article in BOND Newsletter, November 2004

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- **'From development research to pro-poor policy: evidence and the change process'**, *Julius Court and John Young*, in *Dialogues at the Interface: Science and Technology Policy for Development*, Louk Box and Rutger Engelhard (eds) (2006) The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Directorate General for Development Cooperation. pp 100-108
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- **Bridging Research and Policy in International Development: An analytical and practical framework**, *Development in Practice*, Volume 16 (1): 85-90, February 2006, Julius Court and John Young
- **Bridging Research and Policy in International Development**, *Journal of International Development (JID) Special Issue 17(6)* Edited by Julius Court and Simon Maxwell, August 2005

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The Overseas Development Institute's Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) programme undertakes research, advisory and public affairs work on the interface between research and policy to promote more evidence-based development policy and practice. The programme is identifying, developing, distributing and delivering tools, resources and training support that can help researchers access policy processes, with the aim of using their research to contribute to more evidence-based and pro-poor policy. This toolkit presents work in progress on communication tools, specifically geared towards the needs of researchers in civil society organisations.