

TOPIC GUIDE ON
**COMMUNICATION
AND GOVERNANCE**

Huma Haider, Claire Mcloughlin and Zoë Scott
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CommGAP

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Governance and Social
Development Resource Centre

TOPIC GUIDE ON
COMMUNICATION AND GOVERNANCE

Huma Haider, Claire Mcloughlin and Zoë Scott

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

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

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

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

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ABOUT THE GSDRC

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

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

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

www.worldbank.org/commgap

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THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

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- Does communication matter for good governance?
- Communication structures and processes
- Public opinion and the democratic public sphere
- The communication functions of government
- The role of the media in democratic governance
- Evidence of the impact of communication on governance and development

INTRODUCTION

Communication for development

The evolution of communication for development (C4D) has mirrored broader shifts in theories and models of economic and social development. For much of the post-World War II period, C4D was informed by the ‘modernization’ paradigm, which sought to transform ‘traditional’ societies into modern, Western societies through the transmission of attitudes, practices and technologies. Correspondingly, communication initiatives adopted a diffusion approach, which uses communication to carry out a transfer of information. This includes large-scale media campaigns, social marketing, dissemination of printed materials, ‘education-entertainment’ and other forms of one-way transmission of information from the sender to the receiver.

Proponents of diffusion theory recognised the limitations of mass media, however, in promoting sustained behavioral change. The theory also incorporated interpersonal communication: face-to-face communication that can either be one-on-one or in small groups. The objectives are to share information, respond to questions, and motivate specific behavioral practices. The belief is that while mass media allows for the learning of new ideas, interpersonal networks encourage the shift from knowledge to continued practice.

Criticism of the modernization paradigm grew in the 1970s and 1980s. The one-way flow of information and communication from the North to the South was criticized alongside calls for greater representation of voices from the South. At the same time, there was a push for more ‘participatory’ approaches to development. This triggered the emergence also of participatory development communication, which aims to empower the community towards collective decision-making and action through enhanced knowledge and skills to identify, prioritise and resolve problems and needs.

Communication for development has thus come to be seen as a way to amplify voice, facilitate meaningful participation, and foster social change. The 2006 World Congress on Communication for Development defined C4D as ‘a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels including listening, building trust, sharing

knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change'. Such two-way, horizontal approaches to communication include public hearings, debates, deliberations and stakeholder consultations, participatory radio and video, community-based theatre and story-telling, and web forums.

Diffusion and participatory approaches have been increasingly integrated or adopted in parallel in C4D initiatives. Such combinations allow for agencies to reach broad audiences through large scale campaigns, while promoting local community development, empowerment and ownership through participation.

Inagaki, R., 2007, 'Communicating the Impact of Communication for Development: Recent Trends in Empirical Research', World Bank, Washington DC

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/08/10/000310607_20070810123306/Rendered/PDF/405430Communic18082137167101PUBLIC1.pdf

How can the use of communication in international assistance programmes be promoted and improved? This report argues that the communication community needs to: articulate more clearly why communication is essential for meeting the MDGs, demonstrate positive impacts of communication on development initiatives, and engage in more effective evaluation mechanisms. It aims to contribute to the promotion of communication in development by presenting evidence of positive impacts from a review of recent academic research in the field. It also discusses weak spots in the evidence and proposes areas of further research.

UNICEF, 2005, 'Strategic Communication: For Behaviour and Social Change in South Asia', Regional Office for South Asia, UNICEF

http://www.unicef.org/rosa/Strategic_Communication_for_Behaviour_and_Social_Change.pdf

How has communication been used as a strategy to change knowledge, attitudes and behavior? How has it been used to facilitate broader social change? This paper profiles recent experiences in South Asia and elsewhere in applying various communication approaches for behaviour and social change. It looks specifically at two key contemporary communication strategies: entertainment education; and interpersonal and participatory communication. It finds that communication strategies work best when integrated with various strategies for behavior change or behavior development, social mobilization and advocacy; and when linked to other programme elements and service provision. It also finds that there is a need to extend communication strategies beyond individuals and households to include service providers, traditional and religious leaders, and decision makers to engender systemic social change.

The Communication Initiative, FAO and World Bank, 2007, 'World Congress on Communication for Development: Lessons, Challenges, and the Way Forward', World Bank, Washington D.C.

<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/ai143e/ai143e00.pdf>

Communication and the governance agenda

Whilst the role of communication in supporting democratic development and stimulating economic growth is increasingly recognised in international policy statements, in practice communication remains

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

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

Nevertheless, legitimate questions remain regarding the role of donors in supporting communication in pursuit of good governance, not least what type of support is likely to be effective, what choices have to be made between supporting different types of media, and how to ensure interventions in this area are demand-led, sustainable and ultimately in the public interest; particularly the interests of the poor and marginalised. Overall, many studies conclude there is a need for better understanding of the circumstances under which communication, and in particular the media, can be a powerful force for positive, developmental change, and why in other cases it can be a more malign force capable of blocking pro-poor reform, engendering political violence, and sustaining undemocratic political systems.

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

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

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

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

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

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

DOES COMMUNICATION MATTER FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE?

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

Communication and state capability, accountability and responsiveness

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

- **Capability:** Consultation and dialogue between state and citizens can in principle improve public understanding of and support for government policies and encourage citizen ownership of reform. Without the support of the public, governments often lack the capability to get things done.
- **Accountability:** Access to information and government transparency are in theory vital for enabling citizens to monitor and hold government to account for its actions. There is significant evidence that transparency can reduce opportunities for corruption.
- **Responsiveness:** An informed and politically active electorate in theory strengthens the demand for governments to be accountable. There are several examples where such processes (e.g. debate through the media, public information campaigns, social accountability mechanisms) have encouraged government responsiveness to citizens' demands and resulted in better public services.

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

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

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

CommGAP, 2011, 'The Contribution of Government Communication Capacity to Achieving Good Governance Outcomes', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank, Washington, DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4135>

How important is a government's capacity to communicate effectively with its constituents? What the role does communication play in good governance? This policy brief argues that good communication is a fundamental function of modern governance. Effective two-way communication between the government and the public strengthens legitimate public authority. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of attaining good governance outcomes.

COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

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

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

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

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

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

political systems. It is important to understand both communication processes and the framework for national dialogue in which these operate.

PUBLIC OPINION AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The public sphere is the space where citizens come together to freely engage in dialogue and debate on issues which matter to their lives, and through that debate aim to influence government policy and bring about social change. A democratic public sphere relies on an active civil society, engaged citizens and a free and independent media. It also requires constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties and the right to freedom of opinion and assembly. In non-pluralist contexts, the state often controls the public sphere and has a monopoly on traditional mass media.

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

Odugbemi, S., 2008, 'Public Opinion, the Public Sphere, and Quality of Governance: An Exploration', Chapter 2 in Governance Reform under Real World Conditions, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank, Washington DC

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

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

Policy and technical briefs are also available:

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE COMMUNICATION FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

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

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

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

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

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Does a steady diet of negative news foster mistrust of government and political disenchantment? This paper examines the impact of the media on public perceptions and argues that although plausible, the evidence for theories of negative news is inconclusive. In fact, regular exposure to news can improve engagement with democratic norms. Further, evidence from Britain and the USA shows that the impact of media coverage of political scandals is mixed. Considerable caution is needed in any claims regarding journalism's role in public dissatisfaction with government. There is no evidence supporting the 'video-malaise' theory that exposure to broadcast news damages people's democratic orientation. In fact, regular media exposure is positively related to democratic aspirations.

A technical brief is also available:

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

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

EVIDENCE OF THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION ON GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Advocates of communication acknowledge the need for more studies examining the impact (both positive and negative) of communication on democratic governance. To date, a handful of widely-cited empirical studies have found that open communication environments – particularly media initiatives and access to information – are correlated with improved government responsiveness and accountability, lower levels of corruption, and economic and social development. It is widely

acknowledged, however, that correlation does not prove causation, and caution is needed in drawing direct causal links between good communication *structures* and good governance.

At the *process* level, there is some empirical and anecdotal evidence in the communication for development (C4D) literature and in the political communication literature of how communication can impact on people's opinions and behavior. This includes, in the case of C4D, increasing people's individual knowledge of or participation in health initiatives, or their support for various development outcomes; and in the case of political communication, increasing knowledge of and participation in political systems, or support for good governance.

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

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

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

Inagaki, R., 2007, Communicating the Impact of Communication for Development: Recent Trends in Empirical Research, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www->

wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/08/10/000310607_20070810123306/Rendered/PDF/405430Communic18082137167101PUBLIC1.pdf

How can the use of communication in international assistance programmes be promoted and improved? This report argues that the communication community needs to: articulate more clearly why communication is essential for meeting the MDGs, demonstrate positive impacts of communication on development initiatives, and engage in more effective evaluation mechanisms. It aims to contribute to the promotion of communication in development by presenting evidence of positive impacts from a review of recent academic research in the field. It also discusses weak spots in the evidence and proposes areas of further research.

McLoughlin, C., 2011, 'Impact of Communication for Development', Helpdesk Research Report, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, University of Birmingham

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=688>

Development agencies are increasingly recognising the potential of communication for development (C4D) to improve development outcomes and to enhance the overall effectiveness of aid programmes. This coincides with growing evidence of the impact of C4D on the MDGs. This report provides some practical, tangible examples of where C4D activities have improved development outcomes or helped achieve development goals.

ADB, 2011, 'Improving Project Success through Effective Communication and Participation', Learning Lessons, Independent Evaluation, Asian Development Bank

<http://www.adb.org/Evaluation/documents/lessons-communications.pdf>

Public sphere and deliberation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Media and development

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Information and transparency

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

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

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

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

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

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

For information on impact of communication on attitude and behaviour change, see the [gender relations](#) section of this guide.

FURTHER RESOURCES

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

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

[UNDP resources on Communication for Development](#)

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

[Communication for Social Change](#)

[The Communication Initiative Network](#)

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

[UNESCO: Communication and Information Sector](#)

[World Bank: Development Communication](#)

[FAO: Communication for Development](#)

[Mo Ibrahim Foundation](#)

[Search for Common Ground](#)

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

COMMUNICATION FOR GOVERNANCE REFORM

Contents

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

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN GOVERNANCE REFORM PROCESSES

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

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

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

ATTITUDE, OPINION AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

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

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

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

Strategic communication

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Basaninyenzi, U., 2011, 'Case Study: A Communication Approach for El Salvador's EDUCO Education Reform Efforts', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTGOVACC/Resources/PP2EDUCOV1.pdf>

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

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

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

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

For information on attitude and behaviour change concerning gender norms and practices, see the [gender relations](#) section of this guide.

COMMUNICATION AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

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

CommGAP, 2009, 'Political Economy Analysis to Action: Political Communication Approaches and Techniques', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank, Washington DC
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3763>

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

Martinsson, J., 2011, 'Global Norms: Creation, Diffusion, and Limits', Discussion Paper, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, Washington DC
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4153>

What strategies are needed for global norms in development to take root and become part of global and domestic agendas? This study explores global development norms from emergence to implementation. It argues that raising awareness alone is not sufficient to achieve transformational change: implementation and monitoring must be considered equally important to global agenda-setting.

Singh, A., 2008, 'Political Economy Reforms: Learning from the Delhi Water Experience', in Governance Reform Under Real World Conditions, eds. S. Odugbemi and T. Jacobson, Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank, Washington DC
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3764>

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

Additional resources are available from the workshop, 'Political Economy of Reform: Moving from Analysis to Action', held by CommGAP and the World Bank Institute's Governance Practice in 2010:
<http://go.worldbank.org/RL2JUZV2N0>

BUILDING STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT FOR REFORM

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

Designing communication strategies

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

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

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

Coalition building

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

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

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

Influencing public opinion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DIALOGUE AND DELIBERATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Which democratic mechanisms might increase and deepen popular participation in the political process? This paper assesses various “democratic innovations” according to their capacity for broadening citizen engagement and deepening participation in agenda-setting and decision-making, as well as their adaptability and cost-effectiveness. It argues that creative approaches can improve democratic engagement, although political resistance and civic suspicion need to be countered through cultural change, well-resourced support and imaginative institutional design.

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

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

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

A policy brief is also available:

CommGAP, 2011, 'Increasing Citizen Action through Deliberation', *Communication for Governance and Accountability Program*, World Bank, Washington, DC

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

CASE STUDIES: USING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN GOVERNANCE REFORM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<http://go.worldbank.org/VO7P6YVHE0>

COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

Contents

- The role of communication in social change and transformation
- Participatory communication
- Social accountability and state-citizen relations
- Gender relations
- Cross cultural dialogue and ownership

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

Can the use of communication contribute to social change and transformation? The growing emphasis on participatory, 'horizontal' communication - such as stakeholder dialogue and consultation and bottom-up community media - has created spaces in which people can define development and give meaning to and claim their citizenship. Such spaces allow people not only to be heard but also to reshape boundaries and social and cultural norms that underpin knowledge and power relations. This in turn could contribute to empowerment and social change. Thus, while mass communication and behavioral change communication are considered useful in themselves and for promoting pre-determined reforms, participatory communication may have greater potential to contribute to locally-owned reforms and sustainable change at various levels of society.

Pettit, J., Salazar, J. F. and Dagon, A. G., 2009, 'Citizens' Media and Communication', *Development in Practice*, vol. 19, no. 4&5, pp. 443-452

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09614520902866462>

Citizens' media and communication comprise social, cultural and political processes that have the potential to be transformative. These approaches and processes are often not well understood, however, by mainstream development policy and practice, resulting in weak implementation. This introductory article finds that citizens' media and communication is about more than bringing diverse voices into pluralist politics: it contributes to processes of social and cultural construction, redefining exclusionary norms and power relations. Local participation, ownership and control can allow people to reshape the spaces in which their voices find expression.

PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

Participatory communication is similar to participatory development in various ways: they both adopt processes and interventions that generate dialogue and collaboration; they are underpinned by the concept of empowerment and expression of voice; and they are concerned with challenging power relations and promoting social change from the bottom-up. In participatory communication, however, this is achieved specifically through communication tools.

Participatory communication requires a shift from a focus on communication as a dissemination or campaigning tool, used to inform and persuade people to change their behavior or attitude – to a focus

on communication as an empowering tool. In the latter case, communication is used to facilitate continual exchanges between different stakeholders to define development concerns and address common problems or goals. This facilitates individual and community ownership of the entire process. Communication approaches have increasingly sought to combine diffusion and participatory methods.

Interventions designed to include multiple components (e.g., group education workshops combined with mass media campaigns; or theatre combined with community dialogue sessions) have in some instances been shown to be more effective in improving outcomes than single component interventions (C-Change, 2009).

It is important to ensure that the participatory spaces in which citizen engagement and exchanges takes place are representative of communities and citizens. Considerations include: On what basis do people enter such spaces? What legitimacy do they have to speak for others? Are marginalized groups involved or represented? How can broader-based representation be achieved? (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007)

While participation is considered a positive outcome in itself, it is also important to link these processes to mechanisms and institutions that can address the issues voiced by participants. An absence of any tangible improvements could eventually lead to disillusionment with participatory communication processes.

Dagron, A. G., 2009, 'Playing with Fire: Power, Participation, and Communication for Development', *Development in Practice*, vol. 19, no. 4&5, pp. 453-465

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4130>

Communication is essential to participatory development. So why is the role of communication in development still poorly understood? Why the lack of support from large development players? This paper highlights gaps between discourse and action, along with outdated evaluation methods, short timeframes and problems of power relations and culture. Participatory communication for development and social change needs to move beyond newly acquired jargon: it must be part of development organisations' policies, strategies, budgets and staffing.

Mozammel, M. (ed.), 2011, 'Poverty Reduction with Strategic Communication: Moving from Awareness Raising to Sustained Citizen Participation', *Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP)*, World Bank, Washington DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4154>

What is the role of communication in Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) processes? This study looks at communication in PRS processes in Ghana, Tanzania, Moldova and Nepal, and in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also explores how the use of strategic communication is being integrated into national development planning and implementation. The rise of new information technologies has helped make civil society even more central in the national development debate. Improving communication can provide opportunities to reconfigure the relationships among government, donors, and civil society.

Waisbord, S., 2008, 'The Institutional Challenges of Participatory Communication in International Aid', *Social Identities*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 505-522

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4133>

Why does the use of participatory communication in development remain limited? Why are informational approaches still favoured in practice? This article takes an institutional perspective,

examining prevalent notions about communication in international aid organisations. The selection of communication approaches is based on institutional factors and expectations, rather than on their analytical value. Institutional dynamics therefore undermine the potential of participatory communication. Researchers and practitioners need to broaden their understanding of communication in international development.

Soledad Muñiz, S., 2010, 'Participatory Development Communication: Between Rhetoric and Reality', Glocal Times, The Communication for Development web magazine, no. 15

<http://wpmu.mah.se/glocaltimes/?p=87>

Cornwall, A. and Coelho, V. S. P., 2007, 'Spaces for Change? The Politics of Participation in New Democratic Arenas', Chapter 1 in Space for Change? The Politics of Citizen Participation in New Democratic Arenas, ed. A. Cornwall, Zed Books, London

http://www.drc-citizenship.org/system/assets/1052734500/original/1052734500-cornwall_etal.2007-spaces.pdf?1289508570

Participatory media

Participatory media allows people to produce and distribute content tailored to their own needs. Individual and community involvement in the entire process of message-making is seen as central to their empowerment and is often considered to be more important than the end-product. This process spans from choosing topics and issues of interest that affect their lives to planning and production of media content. Not only do participants develop a range of media skills, but they can become empowered to find ways to solve problems in their own communities.

In some communities, active participation in communication processes, collaboration, and increased respect for each other's ideas have contributed to community-building, social cohesion and conflict resolution. In Fiji, women used small-format video to record not only their own voices, but those of other women in multi-ethnic social networks (Harris, 2009). In Nepal, participatory media in Lumbini has aimed to be inclusive, encouraging the participation and viewpoints of people from all different religious backgrounds (Martin and Wilmore, 2010).

Martin, K. and Wilmore, M., 2010, 'Local Voices on Community Radio: A Study of 'Our Lumbini' in Nepal', Development in Practice, vol. 20, no. 7, pp. 866-878

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4139>

Do community radio stations achieve the levels of representation and community engagement that they claim? This article describes the experience of the Hamro Lumbini ('Our Lumbini') series in Nepal, developed in response to differing local views on the development of the Buddhanagar World Heritage Site (WHS). The programme received positive feedback for its inclusion of local voices and the opportunity it provided to comment on and shape future local development. It was criticised for not providing enough content in local language and has struggled with financial sustainability. The government needs to provide a more sustainable enabling framework for community radio.

Harris, U. S., 2009, 'Transforming Images: Reimagining Women's Work Through Participatory Video', Development in Practice, vol. 19, no. 4 & 5, pp. 538-549

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4134>

How can participatory media support empowerment, dialogue and community building? This study of a participatory video workshop involving rural women in Fiji found that women integrated local norms and practices in their video production. They used social capital – relationships and social networks – as a key element. Women presented themselves as active citizens who made significant contributions to their families and communities. The project highlighted the importance of encouraging multi-ethnic or heterogeneous social networks in Fiji.

Participatory communication in research

Participatory communication in research enables local citizens, who are traditionally ‘the researched’ to participate in creating and expressing their own knowledge and thus to have a sense of ownership over the research process. Citizen-led approaches to communication are often more visual and expressive. They can complement and enhance more conventional research outputs and promote greater understanding of and uptake of research findings (Cornish and Dunn, 2009).

Cornish, L. and Dunn, A., 2009, 'Creating Knowledge for Action: the Case for Participatory Communication in Research', *Development in Practice*, vol. 19, no. 4&5, pp. 665-677

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4126>

What is participatory communication? Does the application of participatory communication methods to research programmes really produce more effective results? This paper traces the history of participatory communication and describes its contemporary meaning as a citizen-led approach to creating and expressing new knowledge. Examples from the Citizenship Development Research Centre (DRC) suggest that, in the context of civil society, participatory communication can increase activism and action and contribute to sustainable development.

Toolkits and methodologies on participatory communication

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

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

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

Besette, G., 2004, 'Involving the Community: A Guide to Participatory Development Communication', International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa

<http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/31476/33/119952.pdf>

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND STATE-CITIZEN RELATIONS

Social accountability is defined as accountability that relies on civic engagement*. The term is broadly used to refer to participatory governance practices, which are closely linked to citizen empowerment and enhanced state-citizen relations (Malena, 2009). The emphasis is on how citizens and civil society can push for accountability from government officials and responsiveness to public demands. Communication is seen as central to this process (Sida, 2010; BBC World Service Trust, 2010).

There are multiple examples of communication activities aimed to promote social accountability. These include public information campaigns, feedback loops from citizens to policy-makers, social audits, platforms for dialogue and public debate, and informal everyday methods of communication. Practices of social accountability and participatory governance can develop over time. They may initially comprise better information-sharing between citizens and the state and gradually advance to more meaningful and comprehensive forms of participation. Available evidence suggests, however, that not enough is known about why some mechanisms work in some contexts and not others. Results are also mixed in terms of whether these mechanisms can actually increase citizen participation, encourage governments to be responsive to public demands, and ultimately result in improved service outcomes.

While donors cannot directly empower citizens or create social activists, they can encourage the conditions in which they can develop and communicate with the state and each other. Eyben and Ladbury (2006) emphasise that accountability cannot be seen as a matter of citizens on one side and the state on the other, but rather as a 'web of relations, claims and responsibilities'. Donors should thus seek to strengthen accountability by working across the state-society divide and building connections, rather than focusing communication activities on either government reform or strengthening civil society.

* World Bank 'Social Accountability' webpage: <http://go.worldbank.org/Y0UDF953D0>

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

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

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

Odugbemi, Sina and Lee, Taeku, eds., 2011, 'Accountability Through Public Opinion: From Inertia to Public Action', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank, Washington DC

<http://go.worldbank.org/J6I4GWPO10>

What does it mean to make governments accountable to their citizens? How is this achieved? How can genuine demand for accountability among citizens be fostered? How can citizens be moved from inertia to public action? This book addresses these questions that are crucial to understanding accountability

and for understanding why accountability is important to improve the effectiveness of development aid. It argues that accountability is a matter of public opinion. Governments will only be accountable if there are incentives for them to do so—and only an active and critical public will change the incentives of government officials to make them responsive to citizens' demands. Accountability without public opinion is a technocratic, but not an effective solution.

SIDA, 2010, 'Getting it Together: Strengthening Transparency, Accountability, Participation and Non-discrimination with Communication Methods', Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Stockholm

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/34/47182861.pdf>

Eyben, R. and Ladbury, S., 2006, 'Building Effective States: Taking a Citizen's Perspective', Development Research Centre, Citizenship, Participation and Accountability, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=1994>

How can a citizen-centred approach to development build effective states by improving relations between state and society? This paper from the Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability, gives an overview of current debates and analyses citizens' own views on these issues. It argues that a state's legitimacy is strengthened by civic participation, which often grows up around local issues, and can be empowered through donor support.

Malena, Carmen, 2009, 'Building Political Will for Participatory Governance: An Introduction', Chapter 1 in From Political Won't to Political Will: Building Support for Participatory Governance, ed. C. Malena, Civicus

http://www.styluspub.com/resrcs/chapters/1565493117_excerpt.pdf

The role of information, the media and civil society

What is the role of access to information in generating citizen demand for accountability? There is wideranging consensus that without access to information on the performance of governments, it is very difficult to mobilise citizens to hold government to account. And in the absence of citizen demand for accountability, there may be little incentive for governments to actually be accountable. Some experts argue, therefore, that access to and use of information is a precondition to any form of social accountability.

Civil society organisations and independent media can play important roles in creating the conditions for accountability by advocating for greater access to information and by providing independent and diverse sources of information to citizens. The media can not only bring information to light but also provide a forum for public debate and deliberation. The media can further strengthen social accountability by assisting and promoting civil society organisations. In Argentina, for example, many newspaper articles reported on civil society organisations that called for specific actions in response to government wrong-doing (Bonner, 2009).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bonner, Michelle D., 2009, 'Media as Social Accountability: The Case of Police Violence in Argentina', The International Journal of Press/Politics, vol. 14 no. 3, pp. 296-312

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4128>

What is the role of the media as a mechanism of social accountability? This article examines media reaction to an incident of police violence in Argentina. It argues that such media debates can help to establish a form of preventive accountability. They do this by providing a forum for debate for a plurality of actors to establish who should be held accountable, what they should be held accountable for, and how they should be held accountable.

BBC World Service Trust, 2010, 'How to Use Communication to Make Aid Effective: Strategies and Approaches for Programme-based Approaches', BBC World Service Trust

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/pdf/research_and_policy/communication_to_make_aid_effective.pdf

This review from the BBC World Service Trust examines why and how the role of communication can be mainstreamed into programme-based approaches (PBAs). It argues that information and communication are essential to the existence of an accountability relationship between government and citizens. Information and communication strategies are playing an increasingly central role in enabling citizens to understand and engage with the efforts implemented through PBAs. More specifically, for example, they can enable citizens to understand the funds being spent for their benefit and to express their own perspectives on appropriate spending.

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

GENDER RELATIONS

Communication initiatives aimed at changing attitudes and behaviours have increasingly been used in the health sector since the 1970s. Such initiatives - including television and radio shows, theatre, informational sessions and pamphlets - can and have affected social norms related to gender roles since gender norms are linked to all facets of health behaviour. Initiatives that seek to affect gender norms and inequities as a goal in itself, however, are a relatively new phenomenon.

Community radio is considered to be an effective tool in promoting women's empowerment and participation in governance structures. Radio is often the primary source of information for women. It is accessible to local communities, transcends literacy barriers and uses local languages. Afghan's Woman's Hour, for example, aims to reach a large cross-section of women and offers a forum to discuss gender, social issues and women's rights. It was found that female listeners demonstrated a pronounced capacity to aspire; however, their aspirations were not particularly focused (Bhanot et al., 2009). Challenges with other community radio programming include women's general under-representation and in some cases, the negative portrayal of women.

Participatory approaches are considered to be an effective tool in encouraging alternate discourses, norms and practices; and empowering women. The use of sketches and photography in participatory workshops, for example, have encouraged woman who have traditionally been reluctant to engage in public forums to express themselves.

In order for empowerment of women to have a genuine impact, opportunity structures also need to be addressed, such as conservative and male opinion. Afghan's Women's Hour has a large male audience, which provides a way to challenge male views on gender norms. Group educational activities, a common programme for men and boys, also have the potential to contribute to changes in attitudes on health issues and gender relations and in some cases changes in behaviour. It is also important for communication initiatives to build on tradition and culture not only because this can resonate better with communities, but because it can help to mute opposition from conservative segments of society. The involvement of key community leaders such as teachers, cultural custodians and government officials in projects is also important for greater impact and sustainability of changes.

Cooper, C., Goodsmith, L., Lotter, E. and Molony, T., 2010, 'Communication, Participation and Social Change: A Review of Communication Initiatives Addressing Gender-based Violence, Gender Norms, and Harmful Traditional Practices in Crisis-affected Settings', USAID, American Refugee Committee, Communication for Change

http://www.arcrelief.org/site/DocServer/Through_Our_Eyes_Desk_Review--FINAL.pdf?docID=1602

In conflict and post-conflict settings, high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) can result from disruption of social structures, men's loss of traditional roles, poverty, frustration, alcohol and drug abuse, and criminal impunity. Harmful traditional practices (HTP) also pose a threat to conflict-affected

populations, and the incidence of HTP may increase in communities during and after conflict, as affected communities often respond by strengthening cultural traditions to deal with the loss experienced through the process of displacement. This review of development communication initiatives addressing GBV, HTP and related health concerns in crisis-affected settings finds that there is a need to increase the number of genuinely participatory development communication programs in conflict-affected areas where these concerns are pervasive.

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

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

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

Solervicens, M., ed., 2008, 'Women's Empowerment and Good Governance through Community Radio: Best Experiences for an Action Research Process', AMARC, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters

http://www.amarc.org/wggtcr/text/Book_version_WEB_EN.pdf

Case studies: communication for empowerment of women and social change

Freij, L. S., 2010, "'Safe Age of Marriage" in Yemen: Fostering Change in Social Norms - A Case Study', USAID, Extending Service Delivery (ESD)

http://www.pathfind.org/site/DocServer/ESD_Legacy_Child_Marriage.pdf?docID=18744

Bhanot, A., Haleem, S. and LeRoux-Rutledge, E., 2009, 'The Impact of the BBC World Service Trust's Programme Afghan Woman's Hour – Results from a National Survey in Afghanistan', Research & Learning Group, BBC World Service Trust

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/pdf/wstrust/AWH_Report_Oct_2009.pdf

Harris, U. S., 2009, 'Transforming Images: Reimagining Women's Work Through Participatory Video', Development in Practice, vol. 19, no. 4 & 5, pp. 538-549

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a913192793>

C-Change, 2009, 'Incorporating Male Gender Norms into Family Planning and Reproductive Health Programs', Guidance Brief, Communication for Change, USAID, Washington, DC

http://www.c-changeprogram.org/sites/default/files/Gender%20Norms%20Program%20Brief%20Nov09%20FINAL_0.pdf

Solórzano, I. et al., 2008, 'Catalyzing Personal and Social Change Around Gender, Sexuality, and HIV: Impact Evaluation of Puntos de Encuentro's Communication Strategy in Nicaragua', The Population Council Inc.

http://www.puntos.org.ni/sidoc/descargas/marketing/materiales/investigaciones/SDSI_impact_evaluation.pdf

Durá, L. and Singhal, A., 2008, 'Listening and Healing in the Peruvian Amazon: An Assessment of Minga Peru's Intercultural Radio Educative Project to Prevent and Control Domestic Violence and HIV/AIDS', Project Assessment Submitted to Minga Peru

http://utminers.utep.edu/asinghal/technical%20reports/FINAL-Revised_July-8-2008-singhal-dura-minga-UNIFEM%20report.pdf

Usdin et al., 2005, 'Achieving Social Change on Gender-based Violence: A Report on the Impact Evaluation of Soul City's Fourth Series', Social Science and Medicine, vol. 61, no. 11, pp. 2434-2445

http://econpapers.repec.org/article/eesocmed/v_3a61_3ay_3a2005_3ai_3a11_3ap_3a2434-2445.htm

White, V., Greene, M., Murphy, E., 2003, 'Men and Reproductive Health Programs: Influencing Gender Norms', Commissioned by USAID

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_health/pop/news/gendernorms.doc

For discussion on gender and freedom of information, see the **gender and access to information** subsection of this guide.

CROSS-CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND OWNERSHIP

The ways in which people approach and discuss issues or disseminate and process information can differ greatly from one region to another, and from one social group to another. It is essential to try to understand cultural characteristics and to encourage cultural sensitivity in the production and consumption of communication and information initiatives in order to facilitate access, participation and empowerment.

Cultural awareness and dialogue

Media and information initiatives can counter unilateral perspectives and facilitate intercultural dialogue. Policies that aim to promote cultural diversity in communication content can contribute to pluralism and the flow of ideas. Cultural diversity is thus a key component of quality media (UNESCO, 2009a). New media practices - such as co-production, user-generated content and small production structures made possible through social media - have contributed to diversification in voices. Not only are more information and communication products emerging from developing countries, but also from marginalised segments of populations – such as women, children and ethnic minorities. Such groups had often been absent from the media, in large part due to lack of access to editorial or managerial positions in media organisations.

Increased contacts between members of different groups, communities and cultures through formal and informal communication and information initiatives can contribute to breaking down barriers, countering stereotypes and developing more nuanced views of the 'other'. Various skills are necessary,

however, in order for cross-cultural dialogue to have a genuine effect on promoting pluralism, cultural understanding, and empathy. These include basic abilities to listen, receptiveness, respect for others and the ability to reflect.

UNESCO, 2009a, 'Communication and Cultural Contents', Chapter 5 in Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue: UNESCO World Report, UNESCO Publishing, Paris

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4137>

What has been the impact of communication – such as the media and the Internet – on cultural diversity? This chapter examines the rise of global communication, and new media. It argues that the greater prevalence of media holds opportunities and threats, especially in relation to audience fragmentation and the proliferation of stereotypes. Initiatives are needed to ensure that global audiences and cross-border programming contribute to pluralism and the free flow of ideas that foster cultural diversity.

UNESCO, 2009b, 'Intercultural Dialogue, Chapter 2 in Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue: UNESCO World Report, UNESCO Publishing, Paris

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4136>

How can intercultural dialogue be promoted? This chapter examines cultural interactions and the barriers to dialogue such as stereotyping and intolerance. It argues that the perceived traits or identities that can lead to isolation and stereotyping can also be the bases for dialogue. The success of intercultural dialogue is dependent on the ability to listen with empathy. Support should continue to be given to networks and initiatives for intercultural and interfaith dialogue at all levels. It is important to ensure the full involvement of new partners, especially women and young people.

For discussion on the role of [dialogue in peacemaking and peacebuilding](#), see the GSDRC's Conflict topic guide.

Local ownership

Communicating effectively requires an understanding of the 'information ecology' of a society: how information is disseminated, what methods and sources are trusted, the importance of traditional and cultural networks compared to conventional media (Haselock, 2010). An understanding of the context and culture of a society is essential. Demand-driven projects are often more likely to succeed and to achieve local ownership. These require a communication approach that places as much emphasis on listening to local populations as on transmitting information.

Haselock, S., 2010, 'Make it Theirs: The Imperative of Local Ownership in Communications and Media Initiatives', Special Report, no. 253, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4122>

This paper analyses media reform programmes as part of wider peace-building interventions in the Balkans, the Middle East, and Africa. It concludes that the most effective interventions were those where local populations participated and took ownership of the projects, ensuring that the media initiatives were culturally relevant and demand-driven. The impact of projects can be sustained after international assistance is over only if they are wholly owned by the people, professions, and communities that they were designed to help.

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Contents

- Why media development matters
- Supporting independent news media
- Professionalising journalism
- Media literacy
- Lessons learned in media assistance
- Monitoring and evaluating media development
- Gender and media development

WHY MEDIA DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

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

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

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

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

Servaes, J., 2009, 'Communication Policies, Good Governance and Development Journalism', *COMMUNICATIO*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 50-80

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4129>

How can communication support sustainable development? This article assesses different communication strategies in terms of short- and long-term development objectives. It outlines media performance indicators, and refers to recent events in Kenya to argue for a communication for development perspective that focuses on the self-development of local communities.

Challenges for media development

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

Changes in the media landscape, in particular the rise of information and communication technologies, also require changes to the way in which media development is conceptualised. Donors can no longer conceive of conventional media as a stand-alone platform for communication, but need to integrate both ICT and traditional platforms in media development discourse and practice.

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

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

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

Berger, G., 2010, 'Problematizing 'Media Development' As a Bandwagon Gets Rolling', *International Communication Gazette*, vol. 72, no. 7, pp. 547-565

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4131>

What does 'media development' mean? This article argues that the concept of media development is marred by lack of definition and conflation of means and ends. A better understanding involves the

concepts of 'media density' and 'media mobilisation' and consideration of new media. If media development interventions are to impact journalism, democracy and development, clarity is essential.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For further discussion on ICTs, see the [social media](#) section of this guide.

SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT NEWS MEDIA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Supporting Public Service Broadcasting (PSB)

A key concern for donors is promoting Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) and creating the necessary legislative and regulatory environment to ensure media independence. PSB should be available and accessible to all with broad programming diversity, impartiality of reporting and protection from both political and commercial interests. PSB can contribute to good governance where it provides unbiased information to the public, gives voice to all and is obliged to promote alternative views which is critical for democracy. It can also play a role in fostering a common national identity, promoting tolerance and facilitating discussion around governance-related issues, for example PRSPs and Peace Agreements.

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

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

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

Community media

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

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

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

What is the link between community communication and human development? How can donors support community media? This article argues that community media represent a crucial input in development processes, playing an important role in democratisation, social struggles, and awareness

raising. But they often face financial and legal difficulties due to the constraints created by national media laws. It concludes with suggestions for development advocates and communities regarding advocacy for a policy environment supportive of community media, drawing on case studies from the UK, where the communication regulator has opened a process to license community radios; and Brazil, where thousands of 'illegal' community stations are facing repression, but where the regulator has inaugurated a consultation process with practitioners.

Regulatory reform

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

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

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

What steps enable the development of free and independent media? This chapter examines the relationship between free and independent media and democratic institutions. Each step in political and legal transitions contributes to an enabling environment for independent media, which in turn promotes achievement of broader political goals. It is not only laws themselves that must be addressed, but the institutional structures administering them.

Support to media around elections

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

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

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

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

Stremlau, N., and Price, M., 2009, 'Media, Elections and Political Violence in Eastern Africa: Towards a Comparative Framework', Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy, Centre for Socio-Legal

Studies, University of Oxford / Center for Global Communication Studies, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania / Stanhope Centre for Communications Policy Research, London

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

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

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

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

Toolkits

Kalathil, S., 2011, 'Developing Independent Media as an Institution of Accountable Governance: A How-To-Guide', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP), World Bank, Washington DC

<http://go.worldbank.org/43NBAN5L20>

How can programmes be designed to effectively support independent media? This handbook provides guidance on supporting media development programmes. It introduces the fundamentals of media development, provide ways to conceptualize and analyze the sector, and helps guide programming based on political economy analysis as well as individual country context. It also includes ideas on monitoring and evaluation of media development programs, suggestions for conflict environments and new media, and links to further resources.

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

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

PROFESSIONALISING JOURNALISM

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

Wahl-Jorgensen, K. and Cole, B., 2008, 'Newspapers in Sierra Leone: A Case Study of Conditions for Print Journalism in a Post-conflict Society', Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies vol 29 no 1, pp1-20

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3734>

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

Yusha'u, M., 2009, 'Investigative Journalism and Scandal Reporting in the Nigerian Press', *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 155-174

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3729>

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

Panos, 2010, 'Reporting Tax Research: Connecting Researchers and Journalists for Improved Media Coverage and Debate in Kenya', Panos Institute, London

http://zunia.org/uploads/media/knowledge/Panos-London_Reporting-tax-case_study-web1291786294.pdf

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

Berger, G., 2008, 'Toward Defining "Potential Centres of Excellence" in African Journalism Training', *Journalism Practice*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 147-162

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17512780801999337>

What are the particular needs of journalism education in developing countries? This paper describes a UNESCO programme which aimed to identify the journalism schools in Africa with the greatest potential to be "centres of excellence". It presents a set of criteria and indicators that constitute a home-grown and relatively legitimated system of journalism training which could serve as a model within African countries and beyond.

UNESCO's report on this programme is available at:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001514/151496E.pdf>

MEDIA LITERACY

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

A variety of activities can support media literacy, including:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MONITORING AND EVALUATING MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

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

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

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

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

Price, M. E., 2011, 'Press Freedom Measures: An Introduction', in Measures of Press Freedom and Media Contributions to Development, eds. M. E. Price, S. Abbott, and L. Morgan, Mass Communication and Journalism Series, vol. 4

http://www.peterlang.com/download/extract/58422/extract_311289.pdf

Tools for evaluating media development

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

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

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

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

LESSONS LEARNED IN MEDIA ASSISTANCE

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

partners. Some studies stress the need to respect editorial independence, both from local political pressure, and from donor interests.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What has been the impact of ten years of the international community's support to media in the Western Balkans? This report analyses 37 evaluations of media support projects, and makes recommendations for the future. In spite of mixed results, the impact of media assistance has been substantial. Donors should consider the development of the wider media market instead of sustaining too many individual media outlets. Projects should help NGOs to work with lawyers in order to understand and use new laws once reforms have been passed.

GENDER AND MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

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

Gallagher, M., 2005, 'Who Makes the News? Global Media Monitoring Project 2005', WACC, London

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3705>

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

For discussion on media, information and social accountability, see the [social accountability and state-citizen relations](#) section of this guide.

FURTHER RESOURCES

[BBC World Service Trust](#)

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

[UNESCO Portal on Media Development](#)

[Media Map Project](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Contents

- The new communication landscape
- Social media, the public sphere and social change
- Social media, information and e-governance
- Social media in fragile and conflict-affected states

THE NEW COMMUNICATION LANDSCAPE

The communication system of the industrial society was based on mass media, largely television, radio and the print press. Such technologies allow for the mass distribution of a one-way message from one-to-many. The widespread diffusion of the Internet, mobile communication, digital media and a variety of social software tools throughout the world has transformed the communication system into interactive horizontal networks that connect the local and global. New forms of social media*, such as SMS, blogs, social networking sites, podcasts and wikis, cater to the flow of messages from many-to-many. They have provided alternative mediums for citizen communication and participatory journalism.

Social media has been used as a tool to support development outcomes (access to markets, financial services and employment; accountability and transparency; service delivery; and protection of human rights) and to push for social change and transformation. New media should not be seen as socially neutral tools, however. Despite the growth of information and communication technologies in the developing world, in particular mobile phones, some technologies may not be accessible to marginalised groups, which can reinforce inequalities in society.

Further, there has been little comprehensive research or rigorous evaluation of the causal influence of social media. As such, its ability to contribute to development outcomes and social change remains contested. While recent discussion on the political impact of social media has centered on the power of mass protests to topple governments, social media's real potential may lie in supporting civil society and the public sphere.

* The terms 'social media' and 'information and communication technologies (ICTs)' are often used interchangeably.

Aday, S. et al., 2010, 'Blogs and Bullets: New Media in Contentious Politics', United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC

<http://www.usip.org/files/resources/pw65.pdf>

This report explores the effects of new media on contentious politics. It seeks to identify how our understanding of these complex relationships could be improved and how this knowledge could be applied to major policy issues. The report delineates five distinct levels of analysis at which new media may plausibly affect politics and proposes research questions and hypotheses in each area: individual transformation, intergroup relations, collective action, regime policies, and external attention.

Walton, O., 2010, 'New ICTs for development', Helpdesk Research Report, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, University of Birmingham

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=601>

The use of ICTs among poor people is growing rapidly. This short report discusses how new information and communications technologies (ICTs) are being used to enhance development outcomes. First, they have helped to improve poor people's access to markets, financial services and employment. Second, they have helped to improve the provision of services to poor people by governments, the private sector and NGOs, and to make these services more responsive to the needs of poor communities. Third, they have supported improvements in accountability, transparency and participation, by allowing citizens to publicise their concerns and grievances, share ideas, present information and hold governments to account. Fourth, they have contributed to improvements in security and supported efforts to protect human rights. Fifth, ICTs have affected the operational approaches of donors and other development actors. Many of the approaches and tools mentioned in this report are still relatively new, however, and have not been subjected to rigorous evaluation. Very few ICT for Development (ICT4D) activities have proved sustainable. Recent research has stressed the need to shift from a technology-led approach, where the emphasis is on technical innovation towards an approach that emphasises innovative use of already established technology (mobiles, radio, television).

SOCIAL MEDIA, THE PUBLIC SPHERE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

The spread of affordable information and communication technologies, such as mobile phones and the internet, has broadened the public sphere; and shifted it from the institutional realm to the new communication space. The global civil society and public sphere now have the means to exist independently from political institutions (Castells, 2008). Social media are used as organizing and mobilizing tools; and as a medium for debate, dialogue and collective decision-making. Non-state actors rely on horizontal networks of communication and mass media to shape debate in the public sphere, influence opinions, and foster social change. Web-based media technologies have allowed for participation in a new type of public sphere that can be difficult for the state to control.

The effectiveness of new media technologies to bring about social change is highly contested. Critics such as Malcolm Gladwell dismiss new media activism as based on weak ties, which can only demand low-risk participation. In the absence of a hierarchical structure, they claim that it is difficult for social media networks to think strategically. Advocates, such as Clay Shirky, argue that ICTs enable citizens to interact and can accelerate cooperation and action. Others argue that it is the creative ways in which people have adapted the technologies, rather than the technologies themselves, that are a force for social change.

There are various factors at play that can contribute to the success or weakness of social media as an infrastructure for dialogue, civic activism, and social movements. These include the presence of some form of effective leadership; the way in which elites respond; and links with traditional mass media and other partners. Regimes can be caught off guard or they can respond by cracking down on communication tools and protestors. In some cases, regimes have learned to use social media to their

benefit. In order to reach and influence public opinion at large, it is considered important to rely on both ICTs and mass media and to link to the broader activist community.

Castells, M., 2008, 'The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance', The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. 616, no. 1, pp. 78-93

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4140>

This article examines the development of a global public sphere (based on global communication networks), and of 'public diplomacy' in this sphere. Globalisation has shifted debate from the national to the global domain, prompting the emergence of a global civil society, of ad hoc forms of global governance, and of a global public sphere. Public diplomacy – the diplomacy of the public, not of the government – intervenes in this global sphere, laying the ground for traditional forms of diplomacy to act beyond the strict negotiation of power relationships by building on shared cultural meaning. The global public sphere could facilitate public debate to inform the emergence of consensual global governance.

Castells, M., 2007, 'Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society', International Journal of Communication, vol. 1, pp. 238-266

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4125>

How has the relationship between power, the media and politics changed in the context of globalisation, the crisis of political legitimacy and the emergence of new media technologies? What opportunities do these technologies provide for non-traditional actors to set the political agenda? This paper argues that politics and power relations has historically involved a battle over values and ideas played out in the media. The rise of new mass self-communication via new technologies provides opportunities for non-institutional forms of social movements to gain influence. Corporate media and mainstream politics recognise the power of this influence, leading to convergence between traditional and mass self-communication. The battle for power will in future be played out in non-traditional and dynamic forms.

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

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

How has the spread of digital media across international boundaries affected the role of civil society under authoritarian regimes? Examining the case of Cuba, this paper compares civil society dynamics prior to the internet – in the early to mid-1990s – and a decade later. It finds that in the pre-internet period, civil society's focus was on behind-the-scenes struggles for associational autonomy within the state-socialist framework. A decade later, digital media has supported the emergence of a new type of public sphere in which the civil society debate involves autonomous citizen action. However, its effects on political reform depend on the extent to which web-based voices connect with off-line debate and action.

Garrett, R. K., 2006, 'Protest in an Information Society: A Review of Literature on Social Movements and New ICT's', Information, Communication, and Society, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 202-224

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4132>

New information and communications technologies (ICTs) are changing how activists communicate, collaborate and demonstrate. How can we understand these changes? This paper focuses on three factors: mobilising structures, opportunity structures and framing processes. Activists have devised numerous ways to use new technologies for mobilising, realising new political opportunities, and

shaping the language in which movements are discussed. Situating existing studies within a unifying framework will provide a more coherent overview of the field.

Haider, H., 2011, 'Social Media and Reform Networks, Protest and Social Movements', Helpdesk Research Report, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, University of Birmingham
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Helpdesk&id=700>

The widespread diffusion of the Internet, mobile communication, digital media and a variety of social software tools throughout the world has transformed the communication system into interactive horizontal networks that connect the local and global. This helpdesk research report looks at the role of social media in the formation and functioning of civic groups, protest and social movements, the effectiveness of social media and success factors. Social media is considered to contribute to democratic processes, and to be an important mechanism for collective action, protests and social movements. While many claims are made about the effectiveness of social media, there is little systematic research that seeks to estimate the causal effects of social media. Various factors discussed in the literature as contributing to the success or weakness of social media include: leadership, links to conventional media and other activists, elite reaction and external attention.

Gladwell, M. and Shirky, C., 2011, 'From Innovation to Revolution: Do Social Media Make Protests Possible?', Foreign Affairs, March/April
<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67325/malcolm-gladwell-and-clay-shirky/from-innovation-to-revolution>

SOCIAL MEDIA, INFORMATION AND E-GOVERNANCE

ICTs, in particular mobile phones, are seen as providing avenues for 'e-democracy'. They have been used by politicians to gain support and by politicians and civil society to provide information to the electorate for decision-making. In South Africa, political parties used SMS and social networking to communicate with their supporters ahead of the 2009 elections.

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

Wasserman, H., 2011, 'Mobile Phones, Popular Media and Everyday African Democracy: Transmissions and Transgressions', Popular Communication, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 146-158
<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4138>

Do new media technologies, including mobile phones, facilitate political participation and create social change? Why is there renewed optimism in the potential for mobile phones to facilitate change when the sector is typified by inequalities? This paper explores the analytical frameworks for understanding

the relationship between mobile phones and participatory democracy. It argues that mobile phones can ease communication by facilitating information transmission. Their greater potential, however, lies in their capacity to transgress cultural and social borders by refashioning identities and creating informal economies and communicative networks.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3766>

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

E-governance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOCIAL MEDIA IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES

The growth of social media has changed the information space around conflict. People affected by conflict increasingly have the tools to record and share their experiences with the world and to be a part of the media through the use of a cellphone camera and internet access. Information that moves through these networks can have an impact on the course and outcome of the war by affecting public opinion and support domestically and internationally (Sigal, 2009).

While social media can contribute to stability, dialogue, collective identity, and nonviolent political solutions in conflict-affected and fragile states, it can also have adverse outcomes. Elites and others seeking power can use these same tools to organize for political influence, recruitment, and political violence. Citizens too may use ICTs to polarize groups, spread rumors, strengthen biases and foment violence.

Kenya provides an example of both the positive and negative consequences of new media. During the 2007-2008 presidential election crisis, the use of mobile phones made it cheap and easy to spread hateful and violent messages that contributed to mob violence. At the same time, an online human rights campaign called Ushahidi spread awareness of incidents of violence (and their location) using Google Maps and a tool for users to report incidents via mobile phone or Internet browser. Ushahidi allowed for cooperation on a massive scale and provided an outlet for frustrated citizens to become reporters and digital activists.

Despite the transformation of the media landscape, donors and policymakers have often debated and designed policies and programmes in conflict-affected and fragile states based on traditional media. This has largely been the case with evaluations of media's effect on early warning, conflict, state stability and post-conflict reconstruction and governance. Assessments and initiatives related to conflict reporting and peace journalism; and support to independent media are also largely based on conventional media despite the challenge posed to this model by new technologies (Sigal, 2009).

Sigal, I., 2009, 'Digital Media in Conflict-Prone Societies', Center for International Media Assistance, National Endowment for Democracy, Washington, DC

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=4127>

Can digital media help to build peace in weak and conflict-ridden states or will they foment violence? This paper discusses participatory digital media in the context of 21st century conflicts. It argues that successful intervention cannot be based on the operating frameworks of traditional media support. Evidence from case studies in Afghanistan, Kenya, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Burma demonstrates that digital media strategies require dynamism, flexibility and close attention to grassroots reality if they are to build political participation, openness and trust.

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

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

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

Goldstein, J. and Rotich, J., 2008, 'Digital Networked Technologies in Kenya's 2007-2008 Post-Election Crisis', The Berkman Center for Technology and Society, Harvard University

http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/sites/cyber.law.harvard.edu/files/Goldstein&Rotich_Digitally_Networked_Technology_Kenyas_Crisis.pdf.pdf

Using the lens of the 2007–2008 Kenyan presidential election crisis, this case study illustrates how digitally networked technologies, specifically mobile phones and the Internet, were a catalyst to both predatory behavior such as ethnic-based mob violence and to civic behavior such as citizen journalism and human rights campaigns. The paper concludes with the notion that while digital tools can help promote transparency and keep perpetrators from facing impunity, they can also increase the ease of promoting hate speech and ethnic divisions.

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

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

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

communication or participatory journalism. It argues this experience has important implications for the process of democratisation in Kenya.

FURTHER RESOURCES

[Clay Shirky weblog](#)

[iRevolution: from innovation to revolution](#)

[The Meta-Activism Project](#)

[Social Media Today](#)

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – AND ITS CONSTRAINTS

Contents

- Access to information – and its constraints
- Does transparency matter for good governance?
- Supporting open information environments
- Gender and access to information

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – AND ITS CONSTRAINTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DOES TRANSPARENCY MATTER FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUPPORTING OPEN INFORMATION ENVIRONMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Developing access to information legislation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For further information on information legislation and the right to information, see the [right to information](#) section of the GSDRC's human rights topic guide.

Understanding political incentives

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

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

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

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

GENDER AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Access to information, in particular information on the rights of women, is considered essential to the advancement of women and their participation in the development process. The relevance of Freedom of Information legislation is not, however, often recognised or prioritized by organisations promoting women's rights. Greater emphasis is needed on the links between women's rights, social justice, participation, reform and the capacity of women to address these issues through information (Kagoiya, 2009).

Kagoiya, R., 2009, 'Freedom of Information and Women's Rights in Africa: A Collection of Case Studies from Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Zambia', African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), Nairobi

http://www.femnet.or.ke/documents/FOI_Book_2010.pdf

How has the women's movement in Africa incorporated access to information in its advocacy? Research conducted in five African countries: Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Zambia reveal that very few organisations engaged in women's rights have engaged in lobbying for the Freedom of Information Bill. The report recommends that at national levels, the women's movement should create a national forum for the exchange of information and experiences; and at the regional level should work with other actors to push for the Freedom of Information bill and implementation.

For further discussion on access to information, see the **social accountability and state-citizen relations** section of this guide.

FURTHER RESOURCES

[The Carter Centre](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMMUNICATION IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES

Contents

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

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN STATE-BUILDING

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

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

Creating spaces for dialogue, deliberation and wider participation in the public sphere can also contribute to peacebuilding in conflict-affected states. In such environments, dialogue within society requires 'a space in which people would feel safe expressing themselves [and] where they could listen to each other notwithstanding the pain this might rekindle' (Interpeace, cited in Pruitt and Thomas, 2007). Fostering an environment of trust through dialogue has the potential to build societal capacity for deliberation. It is important that participatory processes, that bring people together, also have the capacity to produce results or participants can become disillusioned with the process.

von Kaltenborn-Stachau, H., 2008, 'The Missing Link: Fostering Positive Citizen-State Relations in Post-Conflict Environments', Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, World Bank

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3351>

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

A Policy Brief is also available at:

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

Fortune, F., and Bloh, O., 2008, 'Strategic Communication: The Heart of Post-Conflict Processes', Conflict Trends, 2008/2, African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, South Africa

<http://www.gsdrc.org/go/display&type=Document&id=3756>

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

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

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

What is dialogue and how can it respond to the need for wider participation in the public sphere? The first section of this handbook outlines the need for dialogue and how it can make a difference in pursuit of peace, development and democratic governance. Dialogue is the process of people coming together to build mutual understanding and trust across their differences and create positive outcomes through conversation. The number of dialogue processes taking place around the world has increased, as has the need for a greater understanding of effective dialogue. South Africa, Poland, the Czech Republic and Chile provide examples of transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes. Bosnia, Guatemala and Northern Ireland have laid the foundations for peaceful futures after violent conflict. These experiences provide hope that difficult issues can be dealt with without resorting to force.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How can donors improve their support to communication in conflict-affected and fragile environments? This report draws lessons from the experience of donors, in particular USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, in supporting media and communication in conflict-affected environments. It calls for donors to make media and communication a technical priority in post-conflict and fragile states, and to view media and communication as a public good in itself, rather than as an instrument towards another end.

A policy brief is also available at:

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is the role of the media in exacerbating or resolving post-election disputes? This report presents the findings of a workshop which explored why election violence occurred after some elections and not others, drawing on experiences in Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Somaliland, Tanzania and Sudan. The report

suggests three ways of analysing the role the media can play in post-election violence: 1) as an amplifier, facilitating and accelerating the spread of messages that encourage violence or appeal for peaceful resolutions; 2) as a mirror, offering either an accurate or somewhat distorted reflection of the state and nation-building process; and 3) as an enabler, contributing to the process of nation-building.

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

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

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

Further information is available in the section on [social media in fragile and conflict-affected states](#) in this guide.

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

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CASE STUDIES: COMMUNICATION IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES

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

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

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

<http://www.beta.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/democratic-governance/oslo-governance-center/ogc-fellowship-papers/supporting-public-service-broadcasting-learning-from-bosnia-and-herzegovinas-experience/PublicServiceBroadcasting.pdf>

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

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

FURTHER RESOURCES

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

[ICT for peace foundation](#)