Review of research communication in DFID-funded Research Programme Consortia (RPC)

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Acknowledgements

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

General

AFC	Associates For Change (Ghana)
AKU	Aga Khan University
APHRC	African Population and Health Research Center
APPG	All Party Parliamentary Group
ART	Anti-Retroviral Treatment
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CESS	The Center for Economic and Social Studies
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CHEI	Chinese Health Economics Institute
CNN	Cable News Network
CoP	Community of Practice
CRD	(DFID's) Central Research Department
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Development Research Centre (Precursor to RPC)
ELDIS	An electronic library of development, policy, practice and research
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
GNECC	Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition
HEARD	Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division, Univ. of KwaZulu-Natal
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
id21	Web-based source of British development research results for policymakers
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IIHMR	Indian Institute of Health Management Research
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
INASP	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications
INTRAC	International NGO Research and Training Centre
IPTi	Intermittent Preventive Treatment in Infants (Ghana)
ISSER	Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (Univ. of Ghana)
ITNs	Insecticide-Treated Nets
IUSTI	International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections
IWMF	International Women Media Foundation
JHPIEGO	A non-profit health organisation affiliated with Johns Hopkins University
LPA	Learning and Practice Alliances
LSE	London School of Economics
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
M&EED	Monitoring and Evaluation of Energy and Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MHAC	Mental Health Advisory Committees

MOESS	Ministry of Education and Social Services (Tanzania)
MoH	Ministry of Health
MSC	Most Significant Change
NERCHA	National Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS (Swaziland)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Overseas Development Administration (precursor to DFID)
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OVIs	Objectively verifiable indicators
PDPs	Product development public-private partnerships
PERI	Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information
PMTCT	Preventing Mother-to-Child Transmission (of HIV)
PPA	Partnership Programme Agreement
RATN	Regional AIDS Training Network (based in Kenya)
REDET	Research and Education for Democracy in Tanzania
RMMRU	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (University of Dhaka)
RNRRS	Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy
RPC	Research Programme Consortium/a
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
TB	Tuberculosis
THES	Times Higher Education Supplement
TNVS	Tanzania National Voucher Scheme
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UKFIET	United Kingdom Forum for International Education and Training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
US	United States of America
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing (for HIV)
WHO	World Health Organization
WB SEIA	World Bank Secondary Education in Africa
GHIN	Global HIV/AIDS Initiatives Network
JCRC	Joint Clinical Research Centre (Uganda)
HEFP	University of Warwick, Higher Education Foundation Programme
DAC Govnet	OECD Development Assistance Committee Governance Network
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MRC-UVRI	Medical Research Council's Uganda Virus Research Institute
CD4	Cluster of differentiation 4 (a T cell glycoprotein)
NEIM	Núcleo de Estudos Interdisciplinares sobre a Mulher (Center for Interdisciplinary Studies on Women) (Brazil)
NRG	National Reference Group
IHI	Institute for Healthcare Improvement

LATH   Liverpool Associates in Tropical Health
OVC   Orphans and vulnerable children
NCEUS   National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (India)
IWMF   International Women Media Foundation
USAID   United States Agency for International Development
IMMPACT   Initiative for Maternal Mortality Programme Assessment
IUDD   Infrastructure and Urban Development Department
MRC   UK Medical Research Council

DFID-Funded Research Programme Consortia[1]

ABBA   Addressing the Balance of Burden in AIDS
Citizenship   Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability
COMDIS   Communicable Diseases, Vulnerability, Risk and Poverty
CPRC   Chronic Poverty Research Centre
CREATE   Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity
CREHS   Consortium for Research on Equitable Health Systems
CRISE   Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity
CSRC   Crisis States Research Centre
EdQual   Implementing Education Quality in Low-income Countries
EfA   Evidence for Action on HIV Treatment and Care Systems
Effective   Best available evidence in the health sector
Health Care
Future   Making health systems work for the poor
Health
Systems
Future State   Centre for the Future State
IFG   International Forum on Globalisation
IPPG   Improving Institutions for Pro-Poor Growth
MHAPP   The Mental Health and Poverty Project
Migration   Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty
Pathways   Pathways of Women's Empowerment
PISCES   Policy Innovation Systems for Clean Energy Security
Power   Power, Politics and the State
RaD   Religions and Development Research Programme Consortium
Realising   Sexual and reproductive health for poor and vulnerable population
Rights
RECOUP   Educational outcomes and poverty
RiPPLE   Research-inspired Policy and Practice Learning in Ethiopia and the Nile Region
RIU   Research into Use
SRH & HIV   Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV in Developing Countries
TARGETS   Effective Tools and Strategies for Communicable Disease Control
Towards 4+5   Achieving MDGs 4 and 5: Policy for mother and infant care

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1 See Annex 3 for further details

WEMC   Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts
Young Lives   An international study of childhood poverty

Other DFID-Funded Research Programmes

RNRRS   Renewable Natural Resource Research Strategy (with 10 programmes):
  AFGRP   Aquaculture and Fish Genetics Research Programme
  FMSP   Fisheries Management Science Programme
  PHFRP   Post Harvest Fisheries Research Programme
  AHP   Animal Health Programme
  LPP   Livestock Production Programme
  CPHP   Crop Post Harvest Programme
  CPP   Crop Protection Programme
  PSP   Plant Sciences Research Programme
  FRP: Forestry Research Programme
  NRSP   Natural Resource Systems Programme
EngKaR   The Engineering Knowledge and Research Programme
DART   The Development of Anti-Retroviral Therapy in Africa
ARROW   Anti-Retroviral Therapy in Africa for Watoto
MMV   The Medicines for Malaria Venture
RALF   Research in Alternative Livelihoods Funds

Executive Summary

Background

One of DFID's models for competitively funded research programmes is the Research Programme Consortium (RPC). There are currently 30 DFID-funded RPC, which are listed in Annex 3. The RPC produce research relevant to policy questions within international development. Each consortium is made up of a lead institution (usually a UK university or research institute) and a number of Southern research partner institutions and is typically funded for a period of five years (though a handful are continuations of previously funded Development Research Centres, DRCs). DFID has introduced a policy of 10% minimum spend on communication activities within RPC, and require each one to produce a strategy to show how research would be put into use. DFID provides a series of support mechanisms to enable RPC to integrate more effective communication into their work, including producing guidelines, providing feedback on Communication Strategies, and hosting annual research communication workshops for communications and research staff.

This document presents the findings of a review to assess the effectiveness of the policy. It captures the achievements and challenges of implementing the policy, paying particular attention to RPC communication activities and their attempts and strategies for getting research taken up in policy and practice. It also examines capacity building activities and approaches to monitoring and evaluation for influencing policy and practice. The aim is to provide recommendations for improvements and outline a framework for improved monitoring and evaluation. The overall study objectives and approach are provided in Annex 1 and the Phase 2 approach in Annex 2.

Chapter 2 of the report provides a descriptive overview of communication activities in the RPC and their associated systems for monitoring and evaluation. Chapter 3 outlines the initial evidence of impact based on a review of project documents, which are listed in Annex 4, and a series of 'stories of change' are provided in full in Annex 5. These findings were discussed with communications officers and other RPC staff at a workshop in July 2008. The presentation is included in Annex 6. Chapter 4 explores the extent to which these achievements in the RPC are due to the 10% minimum spend on communication. This is based on a brief comparison between the RPC and 15 other DFID-funded research programmes, as well as the results of focus group discussions in four research organisations that host RPC but that have also received funding from other research donors: the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and the University of Cape Town (UCT). The participants of these groups are listed in Annex 7. Chapter 5 sums up the findings of the review and offers recommendations regarding how DFID could further improve research communication and engagement in the RPC and throughout its research programmes, and in particular how it could establish better M&E systems. The proposed M&E system is elaborated in more detail in Annex 8.

Conclusions

DFID's 10% rule on research communication, and accompanying support, has clearly had a significant positive impact on communication activities within the RPC themselves, but it is less clear what impact the rule itself has had on the organisations hosting RPC. In some, this has been relatively little, either because the impact remains locked within the individual RPC (e.g. LSHTM and UCT), or because there are other forces at work (e.g. IDS and ODI). DFID's development and implementation of the policy, and it's broader engagement in the

debate about the value of improved research communication, seems to be an important contribution to changing attitudes among other donors, which itself contributes to improving incentives and resources for better research communication among research organisations, but also beyond those hosting RPC.

'Best and worst understood' parts of the research communication cycle

The part of the research communication cycle that seems best understood concerns the injunction to **involve stakeholders from the beginning of the research process:** Witness all the stakeholder consultations, inception meetings, national advisory groups, and relationship-building activities that the RPC have initiated. This has had positive effects in terms of enabling some research institutions to be invited by policymakers to present research findings, and even, in some cases, to enter into ongoing dialogues with policy bodies. The RPC's understanding on this point seems to be substantially informed by DFID guidelines and personal feedback from DFID.

The part of the research communication cycle that seems least understood, with a few notable exceptions, is how to use M&E methods strategically in order to **review and assess the impact pathways that are being established, including alliances and partnerships** that are being built with other organisations and networks.

While DFID has been working with RPC on monitoring and evaluation of research communication since the first research communication M&E workshop in September 2006[2] and through the communication M&E network run by IDS, it has taken many RPC some time to get beyond establishing log frames and regular reports. But this is now changing as the RPC appoint fulltime communications staff, who are getting to know each other and the DFID advisors better and have collaborated enthusiastically in a series of events running in parallel with this study (see Annex 8, which presents the report of an M&E Workshop held at DFID, 15 Sept 2008).

Key achievements and gaps/challenges

The key features and achievements of research communication in RPC identified by this study are as follows:

Outputs:
- Overall the RPC seem to have a clear focus on **policy-oriented research**, and use a range of **written outputs** and **meetings**.
- But relatively few (e.g. Realising Rights, Pathways, EfA, ABBA, EdQual, Citizenship DRC, Migration DRC, Young Lives, RiPPLE, WEMC) actively use **popular media** (e.g. film, photographs, radio, blogging, drama). It is perhaps surprising that not more explicitly mention using **stories**.
- Even fewer (e.g. CPRC, CRISE, Citizenship DRC and RiPPLe) explicitly mention investing in building **networks**.

Process and structure:
- Overall the RPC do well in setting up national advisory groups as well as RPC advisory groups, and most RPC have established a designated **communication position** within the RPC, as well as a **communications working group**.

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[2] See the scoping paper by Butcher and Yaron (2006), and summary workshop report by Nick Perkins (2006).

- Most RPC probably spend **more than the stipulated 10%** of their budget on communication, if one uses an appropriately wide definition.
- But the Healthlink Scoping Study (Chetley and Perkins 2007) points out that there is a potential for **organisational tension** when the RPC's research aspect is managed by senior and often internationally known researchers, while the communication aspect is managed by a part-time communications officer, who may be a relatively junior member of staff.

M&E:

- Overall the RPC have followed the DFID reporting requirements, have drawn up comprehensible **logframes,** monitor activities and outputs well and produce quarterly and annual reports.
- But few have well established systems to review **impact** on an ongoing basis, especially the ways in which they have an impact through collaboration and partnership with other networks/organisations. Exceptions include the Citizenship DRC which has used Most Significant Change (MSC), Effective Health Care which plans to use success stories and Citizenship DRC, IPPG and RECOUP all mention using Outcome Mapping.
- There is little differentiation between measuring **outputs**, **uptake** and **impact (i.e. change)**. Only a few RPC are trying to focus on and learn from actual changes that have come about, e.g. through Most Significant Change as mentioned above.
- There is little knowledge of how to monitor and evaluate **partnerships** or **networks**.

Working practices:

- There is a considerable amount of evidence that the greater attention and expenditure on communication is also being translated into qualitative changes in working practices. Most importantly, the RPC overall seem to have done well in organising early **stakeholder workshops** and in seeking out further opportunities for **policy engagement**.
- The research produced by the RPC is somewhat more **demand-driven**, more **applied**, more **multi-disciplinary**, and more oriented towards **open access** than it might have been had it not been generated within an RPC model.
- The RPC seem to be establishing links with **other relevant RPC**, they seem to be doing fairly well in seeking out and generating **multiplier funding**, and they are overall making good use of the **synergy effects** that come from being involved in several projects and networks.
- Most RPC seem to be reflecting seriously on how to create good **North-South partnerships**.
- It is rarely made explicit in the RPC documentation what kind of **incentives** are offered within the RPC in order to encourage and sustain the shifts towards the above working practices. This is an important issue to learn more about, considering that the in-built incentives of the UK and US academic systems (which reward publications in peer-reviewed journals, and monographs) in many ways run counter to the working practices that the RPC model is meant to foster.

Getting research taken up:

- While most RPC do not yet have very well established mechanisms for monitoring uptake and impact, many have been quite good at actually **getting research taken up in policy and practice**. Perhaps more importantly, most have established relationships and modes of working that will likely yield opportunities for greater impact in the future. This applies to international, national and sub-national levels of policy formulation and

implementation, as well as to DFID policy, and to having research findings picked up by civil society and media, not to mention prestigious academic circles.

▪ Examples of uptake and impact include:
  o **RPC research being picked up** – e.g. in TARGETS: RPC researcher Prof Cairncross wrote the chapter on water, sanitation and hygiene promotion in the second edition of Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries, published by the World Bank.
  o **RPC being contacted for information** – e.g. The Cochrane Infectious Diseases Group, WHO China and the World Bank have requested information from the Effective Health Care RPC.
  o **RPC recommendations being implemented** – e.g. the SRH & HIV RPC new rapid point-of-care tests for syphilis are being made available at a fraction of their previous cost through the WHO bulk procurement programme.
  o **Visible impact on DFID policy** – e.g. work by the Future State DRC is explicitly mentioned in chapters 2 & 3 of the 2006 DFID White Paper.
  o **Visible impact on National policy** – e.g. the Nepali government has implemented a national maternity care financing scheme based on evidence and recommendations produced by the Towards 4 + 5 RPC.
  o **Contribution to academic discourse** – e.g. A Realising Rights RPC article on sexual behaviour in *The Lancet* (Wellings et al. 2006) attracted a lot of attention from the UK print media and radio/TV.

Capacity strengthening:

▪ RPC seem to have done well in supplying **individual team members** with opportunities for strengthening their research and communication skills.

▪ Some have also taken important steps in the direction of **strengthening Southern capacity for research leadership**. But overall there is perhaps surprisingly little discussion in the RPC documents concerning the challenges involved in promoting greater Southern research leadership.

▪ The same is true of **South-South exchange and collaboration**.

▪ The issues of **partnership and funding** remain complex, and RPC seem to be reflecting on them and dealing with them to the best of their ability.

▪ There is relatively little discussion of whether and how capacity, including institutional connections and arrangements, will be sustained **after the life of the RPC**.

Comparison with other DFID-funded research programmes

The RPC were compared with 15 other DFID-funded programmes that do not have the rule about a 10% minimum spend on communication. The data collected are based on a desk review (see Annex 4), and can therefore only serve as a general guide rather than detailed assessment of the programmes in question. Nevertheless, the data do show the contours of **some significant differences between the RPC and the other DFID-funded research programmes surveyed**. Some of the key differences between the RPC and the other research programmes include:

▪ The RPC do not only engage in dissemination activities on a project-by-project basis, but also approach **communication at the programme level**, e.g. through a communication strategy and a person responsible for programme-wide communication.

▪ The RPC are overall more **embedded in their policy and country contexts**, through e.g. inception-phase stakeholder consultations, long-term partnerships with in-country research organisations, in-country advisory groups, ongoing engagement with policymakers, and a comprehensive set of communication activities in-country (including media).

- The RPC are overall more turned towards engagement and communication with **policy and policymakers**, rather than direct engagement with poor communities.

The relatively high score of one of the comparator programmes, namely the **RNRRS** programmes, also deserves mention. It indicates both that the **DFID focus on poverty** was taken onboard by these programme managers, and that DFID's emphasis on **dissemination and uptake** led to improvements in the range and quality of these programmes' outputs over time. In many ways the RPC model could be seen as a further development of the RNRRS model. The **added advantages of the RPC model** lie in its strategic focus on communication from the start, its focus on communication at a programme level, its programme partnerships with Southern institutions, and its engagement with policymakers at programme level rather than on a project-by-project basis.

Tracking organisational change
Focus group discussions with staff in the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (**LSHTM**), the Institute of Development Studies (**IDS**), the University of Cape Town (**UCT**), and the Overseas Development Institute (**ODI**), identified a very wide range of factors that have influenced the evolution of their communication activities.

- *The internal political context*: including organisational culture, policy orientation, influential individuals and strong leaders.
- *The evidence*: researchers needed to be convinced that simplifying rather than *dumbing down* research findings, could contribute to increased impact on policy and practice. This required a strong evidence base that was more readily available at IDS and ODI than at LSHTM.
- *Links*: groups within the organisations as well as links to other researchers, communicators and policymakers have helped, in all cases, to develop research communication.
- *The external environment*: While the availability of funds form greater communication activity certainly helped, it was the additional support that DFID provided that really made the difference.

Overall, the 10% rule has played an important contributing role to the changes that these organisations have experienced, but has influenced them in different ways. In the case of the LSHTM, the additional resources and support has contributed substantially to improved communication in the RPC, but has not yet had much influence on the organisation as a whole. In ODI, RAPID's interest in research communication and funding provided through a Partnership Programme Agreement with DFID's Civil Society Department to improve the use of evidence in development policy has transformed communication far more than the 10% rule for the RPC hosted there. In IDS, DFID was more a sparring partner than a promoter of research communication, and indeed the development of DFID's approach could be said to have been influenced by IDS's own research communication development process. In the case of UCT, the 10% rule has allowed programmes to ring-fence the resources but has not really changed their approach to policy processes. What has been beneficial is the introduction of innovative practices (such as the reference panel of policymakers).

Overall, the stories gathered through the small focus groups and interviews suggest the development of two strands of research communication. At the extremes, these can best be described as highly professional formal communication activities and entirely informal opportunistic communication activities. In the middle exists a fertile ground of innovative communication practices, the attention to a broader set of policy actors and a constructive interaction between professional communicators with experienced researchers and practitioners.

Recommendations

The key recommendations from this study are that DFID should:

- **Continue with the policy of a minimum spend on communication in the RPC.** The 10% rule on its own may not have been the single cause of changing work practices. But, combined with the support and follow-up of DFID staff and other aspects of the RPC model (partnerships with Southern institutions, a strategic focus on communication and stakeholders from the start, a focus on engagement with policymakers at a programme level), it has contributed to significant changes in working practices and a higher degree of embeddedness in policy and country contexts compared with other DFID-funded research programmes.

- **Consider rolling out a similar minimum spend on communication across all research programmes funded by DFID, in association with similar communication guidelines and support.** As the comparison between the RPC and other DFID-funded research programmes showed, there are some significant differences between those programmes that have a stipulated 10% spend on communication and those that do not.

- **Consider increasing the 10% threshold to 15% for the next round of RPC –** and announce a review at the end of the period that suggests a possible new increase. While there is still little empirical evidence that proves that through improved communication the RPC have had a greater impact on policy than would have taken place with a lower level of spending on communication, there is a widespread feeling that this is the case. An increase to 15% would not constitute an unmanageable requirement for any RPC, since all RPC already spend more that 10% in communication activities, but would provide a clear signal that DFID is awarding particular attention to research communication – and justify increased monitoring and evaluation of these activities, which could provide the empirical evidence in the future. This would also provide a signal to other donors who might be influenced by this to review their own strategies or follow DFID by increasing their communication requirements.

- **Consider emphasising the importance of Southern research leadership to a greater extent.** Some RPC have taken important steps in this direction. But overall there is little discussion in the RPC documents concerning the challenges involved in promoting greater Southern research leadership, or how to take the first practical steps.

- **Provide more practical support to help RPC to implement the communication policy –** this could include**:**
  - o **Providing incentives for innovation.** An award for best innovations in research communication and best presentation of best practices could be set up to promote innovations in research communication among the RPC.
  - o **Establishing links and partnerships.** (at DFID level) with media and new media agencies to promote RPC's research and engagement with journalists.
  - o **Establishing a community of practice.** Set up and facilitate a research communication community of practice (CoP) for RPC's communications staff (but in which researchers could also get involved if they wanted) – as a way of expanding the communication groups formed in IDS and LSHTM as well as sharing across organisations. This CoP could provide backstopping support to RPC by reviewing their communication strategies and M&E systems and providing feedback and guidelines.
  - o **Funding more workshops** and other mechanisms to allow RPC communications officers and other staff to share experiences, e.g. exchange visits, peer-to-peer advisory inputs.
  - o **Provide incentives, guidelines and resources to develop the organisational capacities for communication of the RPC partners.** Ultimately, the spend on communication should be seen as an investment in the capacity of organisations

rather than individuals – who may leave. This will ensure the sustainability of the research communication effort beyond the lifetime of the RPC.

  o **Establishing a communication support centre** for all RPC to share.

- **Review the M&E guidelines and support given to the RPC.** This process has already been started. Drawing on early findings from this report, a workshop was held at DFID on 15 September 2008 to discuss how M&E guidelines given to the RPC might be broadened and made more appropriate to the challenges they face. The key recommendations are that RPC should establish simple systems to track:

  o **Strategy and direction:** The basic plan that the research programme is following;

  o **Management:** The systems, processes and competencies that the programme has in place in order to ensure that the overall strategy is carried out;

  o **The quality of the outputs:** The tangible goods and services that a research programme produces (e.g. journal articles, policy briefs, website, meetings, events, networks, etc);

  o **Uptake:** Direct responses to the research programme (e.g. its research is mentioned in a government policy paper, on a range of websites, referred to in a newspaper article, etc);

  o **Outcomes/impacts:** Changes in behaviour, knowledge, policies, capacities and/or practices that the research has contributed to, directly or indirectly (e.g. a change in government policy implementation, a change in working practices among NGO practitioners, a reduction of poverty in a certain area, strengthened livelihoods, strengthened civil society input into policy processes, etc).

The full report of the workshop in **Annex 7** outlines a range of compulsory and optional tools that could be used for this, with links to more details about how they can be used. This resource has been set up as an on line wiki that the RPC could use and develop further.

- **Fund research (maybe via the CoP) on research communication.** As a way of promoting innovation, new approaches and developing an evidence base for future adoption (like what happened in IDS with the participation group and how is it happening with RAPID), DFID should continue to fund research on the subject. Researchers are more likely to base their decisions on research-based evidence and not just 'experience' or common sense from other 'industries'. The research should have four dimensions:

  o Systematic collection of empirical evidence of the impact of improved research communication.

  o Identification of which approaches to research communication work best in which contexts and the development of approaches and frameworks to help research teams develop context-specific communication and engagement strategies.

  o Research into the broader institutional incentives affecting development researchers, and what can be done to orientate them more towards policy and practice than academic publications.

  o Gathering success stories and practical examples of how to do it.

- **Continue to lobby other research donors** and encourage them to also invest more in research communication.

Chapter 1: Introduction

DFID's Central Research Department (CRD) is embarking on a new five-year research strategy 2008-2013. The strategy is set against a 20-year vision of how DFID can contribute to global and developing country research for sustained impact on poverty reduction beyond the Millennium Development Goals. The strategy will build on DFID's Research Funding Framework 2005-2007, and will highlight three cross-cutting issues: ensuring that research is demand-driven; getting research into use through improved engagement with research users and links to policy; and building the capacity of developing country users and researchers to carry out and access research. The Research Funding Framework outlined DFID's commitment to getting research taken up and used in policy and practice, recognising that getting research into use is not simply a question of disseminating findings.

One of DFID's models for competitively funded research programmes is the Research Programme Consortium (RPC). There are currently 30 DFID-funded RPC (see **Annex 3**). The RPC produce research relevant to policy questions within international development. Each consortium is made up of a lead institution (usually a UK university or research institute) and a number of Southern research partner institutions, and is typically funded for a period of five years (though a handful are continuations of previously funded Development Research Centres, DRCs). DFID has introduced a policy of 10% minimum spend on communication within RPC, and required each one to produce a strategy to show how research would be put into use. DFID provided a series of support mechanisms to enable RPC to integrate more effective communication into their work, including producing guidelines,[3] providing feedback on communication strategies, and hosting annual research communication workshops for communication and research staff.

This document presents the findings of a review process to assess the effectiveness of the policy on communication within DFID-funded RPC. It aims to capture the achievements and challenges of DFID's policy of 10% spend on communication in getting research taken up in policy and practice, and in building capacity.

The objectives of the review were:
1. To assess the effectiveness of DFID's policy (of minimum spend of 10% on communications in RPC) in making research more appropriate for different audiences, more accessible, and taken up in policy and practice.
2. To capture (highlight) the achievements of the policy in both getting research taken up, and building capacity among researchers and intermediaries playing a role in uptake. Specific attention should be paid to innovative processes and unintended consequences of the policy and its implementation, as well as incentives to effective communication provided by the RPC management.
3. To recommend the structures, processes, and organisational arrangements that would make uptake in policy and practice more likely in future. What implications for DFID and its future support to RPC and other models of DFID-funded research including financial and human resources.
4. To propose a framework for assessing the cost effectiveness of information services within research, including outlining M&E indicators that are useful in capturing the different spheres of research uptake and capacity building.
5. To unearth evidence of enhanced individual and institutional capabilities to communicate research, and to offer insights into which parts of the research communication cycle are best and worst understood and systematically undertaken.

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[3] http://www.dfid.gov.uk/research/guidance.asp

The full terms of reference can be found in the project proposal (**Annex 1**) and the Phase 2 proposal (**Annex 2**).

Chapter 2 provides a descriptive overview of communication in the RPC. The chapter first examines how communication is positioned in relation to the RPC's overall purpose, and then presents a more detailed survey of the range of communication outputs, processes and structures that the RPC currently use. The chapter also reviews the RPC's current M&E processes. The findings in this chapter are drawn from a desk review of relevant RPC documentation (listed in **Annex 4**).

Chapter 3 presents the achievements of the communication focus in the RPC to date. The findings in this chapter are drawn in part from the desk review, and covers RPC achievements in relation to changing working practices, getting research taken up, and strengthening capacity. More detail is also provided from a series of 'stories of change' collected about 11 specific instances identified from the desk review where RPC seem to have achieved impact or changed the way they do things. The individual stories can be found in **Annex 5**.

Chapter 4 turns to the question: To what degree are these achievements due to the 10% minimum spend on communication in the RPC? In order to address this question, the chapter presents a brief comparison between the RPC and 15 other DFID-funded research programmes. Longer term stories are also presented of how the approach to communication has changed over the last decade in four research organisations that host RPC but have also received funding from other research donors: The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), the University of Cape Town (UCT), and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). The data for these stories were collected through focus group discussions with staff from the institutions in question (see **Annex 6**).

Finally, **Chapter 5** sums up the findings of the review and offers recommendations regarding how DFID could further improve research communication and engagement in the RPC and throughout its research programmes, and in particular how it could establish better M&E systems. The proposed M&E system is elaborated in more detail in **Appendix 8**, which contains much of the text of a wiki that was developed during the study. The wiki can be further developed by DFID and RPC staff as a 'living resource' to help roll out the system itself.

Chapter 2: An overview of research communication in the RPC

2.1 Communication and the RPC's overall purpose

The high-level purposes of the RPC, as articulated in their logframes, are all fairly similar in that they aim to produce research that will inform and influence policy at international, national and/or sub-national levels, particularly in their research partner countries. They also include aims regarding capacity strengthening, and some have aims tied to implementation (e.g. within the medical field). Examples include:

- **EfA**: The purpose of the consortium is for policy makers and programme managers to have started applying RPC-generated knowledge in HIV treatment and care systems by the end of the RPC. Neither of these can be achieved without good communication.

- **EdQual**: The overall purpose of the RPC is to change education policies and practices in low income countries, most especially Ghana, Rwanda, Tanzania and South Africa, so as to improve the quality of education for the poorest people in the world and promote gender equity. The communications aim is to communicate new knowledge persuasively to the organisations and individuals who will change national education plans and influence education policy across a range of low income countries, and the institutions and practitioners who implement policy.

While some RPC may phrase their purpose differently, they all have clearly interlinked goals related to research, communication and capacity strengthening in their strategies.

Within the overarching purpose, specific communication plans are drawn up. All the RPC communication strategies identify the different **target audiences** of the RPC (usually encompassing international, national and/or local policymakers, national and local civil society or advocacy organisations and beneficiaries, professionals and practitioners, service providers, researchers, journalists), and differentiated outputs and approaches are put forward for each type of audience, as per DFID guidelines.

Most RPC also draw up **calendars** with key events and influencing opportunities. Several of them have circulated and discussed **communication activity planning sheets** with their partners to ensure that all activities have a clear audience, message, and so on.

2.2 Communication outputs

Written outputs

All RPC produce academic **journal articles** and **policy briefing papers** (or factsheets). Other written outputs include **research reports**, **discussion papers**, and **presentations**. The level and quality of written output seems high overall. A roughly typical distribution is exemplified by Realising Rights:

- **Realising Rights** report in the Annual Report 2006/07 that over the past year they had produced 22 peer-reviewed journal articles, four policy briefings/resource packs, and two toolkits (in addition to a number of draft research reports, presentations, etc).

- **WEMC** produces a slightly unusual written output: **shadow reports** on key international commitments.

All RPC make as many of their written outputs as possible available on their websites. Several mention that they disseminate summaries through **ELDIS or id21** (e.g. MHAPP, EfA, ABBA, CREHS, COMDIS, EdQual, CREATE, Future State, Migration DRC, IPPG, IFG). At other times the written outputs are disseminated widely through **launches** and meetings.

- **CSRC**: The launching of our **special report** on *Why Templates for Media Development Do Not Work in Crisis States* in July 2006 has already had a significant impact, reaching associations of journalists in North America, Europe and Southeast Asia, policymakers, think tanks and research centres, NGOs and educational establishments. The report challenged traditional views of the role of the media, and was especially well received by journalists. Further follow-up meetings to discuss the contents and implications of the report with several individuals and agencies have been planned.

Other written outputs include promotional material, such as **consortium leaflets** and even **promotional postcards** (Young Lives). Several RPC mention that some of their outputs are **translated** into languages other than English (e.g. Realising Rights, Effective Health Care, EdQual, CREATE, Future State, Citizenship DRC, CSRC, Migration DRC, RaD, WEMC, IPPG).

All RPC have **websites** (except IFG and Power, Politics and the State, which are pending). All RPC have also invested in professional **logos and branding** of their outputs. Almost all of them send out occasional **newsletters**. Some of the most successful in this regard are RPC based in IDS:

- **Citizenship DRC**: The quarterly e-newsletter in 2006 had 1,000 subscriptions, including researchers, donors, NGOs, and government officials.
- **Migration DRC**: The subscription list for the newsletter in May 2007 was reported to exceed 800 and we are currently envisaging publishing it on the web four times a year in place of the current two.

Meetings

All RPC have held initial **stakeholder consultation meetings** in each of their research partner countries, as per DFID guidelines, usually attended by a range of academics, policymakers, practitioners and journalists. These consultation meetings occur early in the process (usually inception phase) and therefore help to shape the research. Other types of meetings held and attended include **conferences**, **workshops**, **roundtables**, **seminars**, **closed meetings** and **personal meetings**. CREHS seems roughly typical of the level of meeting activity displayed by RPC:

- **CREHS** reports in the Annual Report 2005/06 that over the past year the RPC had presented its work at 52 meetings, including at conferences, workshops, policy briefings, and individual meetings with key stakeholders.

Networking

All RPC mention ways in which they are able to draw on the existing **contacts and communication channels** of partners and staff, through which they can put their research findings into use.

- **EdQual**: Two consortium member institutions (University of Dar es Salaam and Wits EPU) are represented on the high-level education policy advisory committee for the Southern African Development Community (SADC).
- **CRISE**: The RPC Director participates in the United Nations Committee for Development Policies.
- **CSRC**: At the end of 2005 the programme's South African research partner (based at the University of Cape Town), who had already established good contact with the policy community, joined the African Union (AU) mediation team working on the Darfur conflict at the request of Ambassador Sam Ibok, the head of the team.

A handful of RPC are actively engaged in building **networks** of stakeholders at national or international levels, e.g.:

- **CPRC**: Building and nurturing a network of researchers in West Africa.
- **CRISE**: A major new strategy – noted last year – was to create a network of scholars, in West Africa in particular. The call for proposals has enabled us to start on this. Keeping up the network involves regular visits by people from Oxford to West Africa to discuss progress with researchers, and also some (prospective) visits by young scholars to Oxford, as well as considerable amount of electronic dialogue. We believe this could be an important capacity creating exercise and are now considering how this might be put on a more permanent basis.
- **Citizenship DRC** has been paying particular attention to how to establish and develop a 'learning network' around the programme.
- **RiPPLE** is establishing and working with Learning and Policy Alliances at all levels in Ethiopia and the Nile region.

The media

Almost all RPC mention that they issue **press releases**. Some collaborate with the DFID press office (e.g. SRH & HIV, Effective Health Care) and their university press office (e.g. SRH & HIV, CREHS, EdQual, CREATE, CSRC) for this purpose. A few mention **press conferences** (e.g. WEMC, PISCES) and **media packs** (e.g. Migration DRC). Often Southern partners are the ones with the closest media connections:

- **CSRC**: Researchers of the consortium are regularly approached by national and international media (including the BBC, The Economist, CNN). Their research partner in Uganda (based at MISR) is also now a regular commentator on political events in Uganda and the wider Great Lakes region on a popular daily political talk-show, *Tonight with Andrew Mwenda Live*, on Kfm Radio station. Additionally he writes a weekly newspaper column published in the Sunday Monitor, often directly incorporating insights from the programme's research (for instance on DRC elections, Rwanda gacacca courts, etc.).
- **Migration DRC**: Partner institution RMMRU (Bangladesh) has taken the lead in engaging with the media, consistently involving the media in all events and organising a number of press releases reflecting the programme's research being conducted there.

Training

Some RPC produce **guidelines** and **training courses** for practitioners.

- **COMDIS**: Production of diagnosis and care guidelines, training modules, management, planning and supervisory tools.
- **EdQual**: Training workshops, training and classroom materials.
- **Migration DRC**: Has organised a number of training events, e.g. the RMMRU two-week residential course on migration, globalisation, security and development, in Bangladesh. The course is designed for development practitioners, young academics and professionals, government functionaries, and activists from labour and human rights organisations. The Migration DRC was well represented, with trainers from Sussex, ISSER (Ghana) and CESS (Albania), working alongside partners in Bangladesh, and others. Given the enthusiasm with which participants at this course responded to it, the network of migration interest it created among participants working broadly on development issues, and the subsequent demand for it, they plan to support another course.
- **RaD**: Plans to produce training materials on faiths in development and has formed partnerships with training organisations to do so, including Islamic Relief, INTRAC, Dawah Academy, IIUI, REDET Tanzania.

- **CREATE** research will be integrated into the teaching and learning programmes of the partner institutes. For example, the Institute of Education, London, has over 150 students studying MAs in education and international development and a large number of PhD and EdD students. Many of these students already work for, or go on to work for, international agencies, national and provincial education departments, NGOs, educational practitioners and research bodies.

Popular media

Several of the RPC are using popular media as part of their research and communication process, including **video**, **TV**, **radio**, **drama**, **folk music**, and **storytelling** (e.g. Realising Rights, Pathways, EfA, ABBA, EdQual, Citizenship DRC, Migration DRC, Young Lives, RiPPLE, WEMC).

- **Citizenship DRC**: Organises 'reflective dialogues' with civil society organisations, and produces 'participatory videos' to link community-based organisations and local government officials.

- **Migration DRC**: Has used its ethnographic evidence base to produce two films, one following the lives of Egyptian workers in Paris, and the second, *Voices of Child Migrants*, bringing to life the voices of 16 children from Bangladesh, India, Burkina Faso and Ghana, speaking about their lives, experiences and aspirations.

- **RiPPLE**: The RPC's film *Money into Water, Water into Money* was shown on World Water Day in the Ministry of Water Resources in front of an audience of some 500 people from different sector organisations and simultaneously on a huge public screen in Meskel Square, Addis Ababa. An exhibition of 15 panel photographs and texts describing critical WASH issues in Ethiopia were exhibited alongside the screening at the Ministry and have also been shown at other RiPPLE meetings. The film is now in DVD format and 300 copies have been distributed to Ethiopian institutions and bureaus at national and regional level. The RPC has also received numerous requests for copies.

Internal RPC communication

RPC partners have tried to find the best blend of internal communication including email, phone, Skype, face-to-face meetings, exchange of documents, regular reporting, exchange visits, and so on. Some have set up a programme **intranet** (e.g. RECOUP, CPRC, RaD, WEMC, RiPPLE, EfA), and a few circulate an internal electronic newsletter or update (e.g. SRH & HIV, TARGETS, RiPPLE). All RPC hold **annual consortium meetings**, and they all have different arrangements for reporting and selective meetings throughout the year. Most of them also try to distribute **exchange visits** across all partner institutions, and a few have experimented with **scholar exchange** (e.g. SRH & HIV, Towards 4+5, RaD).

2.3 Communication processes and structures

The stakeholder consultation meetings are usually linked with the setting up of **national reference or advisory groups** in each country.

- **CREATE**: The National Reference Groups (NRGs) will be at the core of relationship building and the strategising that will surround country level policy dialogue. They consist of a mixture of respected analysts, senior officials, educational professionals, NGO members and other opinion leaders co-opted by the RPC partner institutions. They meet approximately every six months to review progress, shape research priorities, quality assure research outputs, and develop communication and influencing strategies.

- **MHAPP**: The Mental Health Advisory Committees (MHACs) to be established in each of the four countries will be made up of members representing key national stakeholder

groups. The MHACs therefore have a critical role to play in raising awareness on the project and disseminating research findings, and will consequently be actively involved in the majority of the activities mapped out in the communication plan below. One of the processes they will contribute to is the organisation of national level media campaigns – using radio, print media, etc.

Many RPC have a more or less decentralised communication strategy, meaning that each partner institution adapts communication activities to their context and follow their own schedule. Some RPC manage this by having a designated communication person in each partner institution, who work with a central communication person (usually a part-time or full-time communications officer), and together they make up a **communications working group** (e.g. SRH & HIV, Realising Rights, EdQual, CREHS, Future Health Systems, CREATE, EfA, PISCES, Citizenship).

- **EfA** has set up a Community of Practice on communication within the consortium, which includes a designated communications person from each partner institution. By sharing experiences in this forum as they come up, they are able to feed lessons learnt into the annual reporting cycles.

Some RPC have established a more sophisticated version of this tied to countries and themes:

- **Citizenship DRC**: Researchers are organised into country-based teams as well as cross-cutting thematic groups. The country coordinator is responsible for leading the implementation of a country-level communication strategy, and thematic convenors have the overall responsibility for leading communication activities for the thematic group. Individual researchers are expected to build communication into their work plan and take responsibility for the specific activities related to their research projects. In addition, the research and communications officer will help build connections between partners and make connections outside the DRC network.

Other RPC have chosen to incorporate communication as an aspect of other management structures.

- **CPRC**: The Director and one Associate Director are responsible for the Policy Analysis and Policy Engagement streams of the programme, including communication. Continuous monitoring of outputs and activities is done by the Programme Manager.

Some RPC have employed a full-time **communications officer** (e.g. CSRC, Citizenship DRC), while others have a part-time communications officer (e.g. Realising Rights, EfA, Future Health Systems).

A substantial part of the **10% minimum spend on communication** usually goes to the communications officer – and this has made it possible for RPC to hire professional communication specialists. The rest of the 10% (and usually more) is spent on the variety of communication outputs described above.

- **CREHS** notes that research user engagement and time spent writing different communication products are funded within those projects and are therefore not counted as part of the 10% but go beyond this percentage.
- **EfA**: Although the specific line item within the budget only lists the salary of the Communications Manager and the specific costs related to the production of communication materials, a much greater proportion of the budget will actually be committed to communication through the part of the time of the research staff that are listed and accounted for under specific institutions' personnel costs. (Each key researcher has committed to spend at least 10% of the time that they have allocated on

communication, and one person from each partner institution acts as the point of contact on communication.) We estimate that the actual budget which will be spent on communication activities is at least 15% of the total programme costs.

- **CREATE**: Partner institutions are able to distribute their budgets as they wish, but have been advised that at least 10% should be allocated to communication. The central communications budget is held at Sussex. This budget line funds: staff time for the Research Officer (2 days per week) and Director (as necessary); CREATE member attendance at international conferences (also supplemented by partner support); the website and database development; internal programme communications via meetings and workshops; CREATE conferences; and additional costs for communications and dissemination. Overall about 16% of the total budget is allocated to communications.

Each RPC has also set up an **external advisory group**, as per DFID guidelines, which consists of a group of respected people in their field as well as DFID representatives. This group provides feedback and guidance on the programme overall, including the programme's communication and evaluation strategies.

Gaps and challenges

The Healthlink Scoping Study (Chetley and Perkins 2007) points out that there is a potential for organisational tension when the RPC's research aspect is managed by **senior and often internationally known researchers**, while the communication aspect is managed by a **part-time communications officer**, who is at times a relatively junior member of staff. This is not the case across all RPC, but it may be sufficiently widespread to present a challenge in relation to the RPC model. Although the 10% minimum spend should make it possible to offer a relatively high salary and to recruit a highly skilled communication professional, this opportunity has not been taken up by all RPC, some even choosing not to employ a dedicated communications staff member at all. Whether or not this has adverse consequences for the RPC's communication capacity is not possible to tell from the paperwork.

2.4 M&E processes

Given that the RPC's purpose is to engage with and inform policy processes, it is difficult to know how to monitor and evaluate their impact. This is a general problem and is not unique to the RPC. A few fairly typical examples of how RPC have addressed this issue are given below, ranging from **high-level OVIs** to **actual M&E activities**:

- **SRH & HIV**: The Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVIs) in their logframe include: 1. References to RPC-generated knowledge in policy documents and media reports; 2. Development of policy-related guidelines by key decision makers, using RPC-generated knowledge; 3. Generation of secondary products such as research commissioned on basis of RPC-generated knowledge.
- **WEMC**: Proposed indicators of impact include: Ten RPC recommendations incorporated into government policies/ practices; Multimedia outputs adopted by 100 civil society groups and educational institutions in 20 countries; Increased government attention to MDG3 in MDG reporting; Better articulation and visibility of women's initiatives at the local level over 2006 baseline; More direct interaction of women in research sites with policymakers in their locality; Increased linkages of women's empowerment initiatives with diverse support institutions; Some instances of changed practices supporting women's lives; Some successful empowerment narratives used by mainstream media; At least 200,000 hits to RPC website per month; Use by mainstream media of WEMC generated information.

- **Realising Rights** and **Future Health Systems**: Proposed M&E activities include: Requesting feedback from our stakeholders, one to one or collectively, on the usefulness and effectiveness of our communications; Using national reference groups to collect information from our target audiences on visibility of RPC research; Monitoring of dissemination activities, including materials produced and distributed; Collection of website statistics, including hits, downloads, user profile, etc.; Recording face-to-face contact and interactions, and the outcome of these communications; Monitoring coverage of RPC agendas in the media in target countries, and assessing the quality of coverage in terms of communicating appropriate messages; Extent of approaches made to consortium members for advice, input, involvement in conferences or workshops; Analysis of any change in policy in line with RPC agendas and whether the work of the programme has been implicated in this.

How is this information actually **collated**? As a start, all RPC monitor the number of written outputs, meetings and presentations that they are engaged in for the annual report to DFID. In addition, RPC have different reporting structures, e.g.:

- **SRH & HIV**: RPC members are required to report to the two Communications Officers every quarter on stakeholders they are talking to, meetings attended, workshops undertaken, conferences attended, publications submitted/accepted/published, and key new research findings.
- **CREATE** and **MHAPP**: All partner institutions give quarterly updates.
- **CPRC**: Progress towards the policy engagement goals is reviewed at each Management Team meeting, which takes place every two months.
- **CREATE**: Communications team members will produce brief reports every six months to map progress, and highlight any areas which need attention.

There is a gap, however, between the regular reporting that takes place e.g. quarterly, and higher-level **reflection around policy impact**. This difficulty is pointed at by several RPC, e.g.:

- **Effective Health Care**: We have an 'impact file' to collate evidence of 3rd party advocacy of our research and evidence of RPC partner influence on policy agendas in countries, but evidence of the impact of the strategy we have found difficult to measure.

As a result, most RPC resolve to leave the higher-level learning around policy impact to mid-term reviews and end-of-programme reviews, when external reviewers have time to conduct interviews, review policy documentation, and so on. A small handful of RPC, however, have expressed an interest in using **M&E methods** that allow them to assess qualitative aspects of their own work on an ongoing basis:

- Citizenship DRC has used the Most Significant Change (MSC) method, and RECOUP is hoping to use it.
- Effective Health Care plans to use success stories and case studies.
- TARGETS: A file has been established on the database that will provide information on the strategy and stories relating to communication. The administration group is also writing short case studies on pertinent issues relating to communication that are evolving as part of the bottom up approach of the RPC.
- EfA is monitoring progress against the milestones identified in the 'Stories of Change' for priority stakeholders.
- Citizenship DRC held a synthesis conference in late November 2005. Over 70 participants, including DRC researchers and others who have worked with the DRC, attended. The conference provided the opportunity to discuss draft versions of a series of 10 synthesis papers. As part of the conference events, clips from films made by DRC

research teams in Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Mexico where shown. In conjunction with the conference, the coordination team organised a participatory video training, using the Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology to encourage researchers to identify where important changes occurred in relation to their work. A group of ten researchers participated, with training provided by Chris Lunch from Insight. The group also conducted interviews with others from the DRC during the conference. The video compiling these stories helped to frame the planning workshop, held immediately after the synthesis conference.

- Citizenship DRC, IPPG, and RECOUP all mention that they wish to use elements from Outcome Mapping, but none have specific details yet.

Who is responsible for M&E? In general this task is assigned to the person responsible for RPC communication activities. DFID does not require the RPC to draw up a separate M&E strategy.

What kind of **M&E training** do the communications officers receive? DFID has hosted workshops for the communications staff in 2006 and 2007, the latter with a partial focus on M&E. The report from the workshop suggests that some participants felt that there was no common language for dealing with impact, that there were frequently contrasting visions around the definition of impact and suggested that DFID had a role in developing a common framework of what impact was. A few RPC are turning to other organisations for training:

- **PISCES**: M&E tools are being developed through the GVEP-supported International Working Group on Monitoring and Evaluation of Energy and Development Projects (M&EED) – which Practical Action has been a participant in – and will be adapted and developed for use in PISCES assessing impacts on communities, research organisations, private sector, donors and policymakers. Capacity will be built on these tools within the consortium through trainings and workshops in Nairobi and Chennai given by PA M&E specialists.

- **RiPPLE**: The RiPPLE Media and Communications Officer has been trained in **process documentation** by IRC and is developing a plan to support and implement process documentation in collaboration with the Comms Team.

Finally, there are a few specific challenges tied to the focus on 'impact'.

- **Future Health Systems**: Although we are tracking contacts made by RPC partners, we are increasingly aware that if officials feel that their contacts with researchers were being reported, they would be more reluctant to meet and be less open to discussions. We are responding by being low key about the contact tracking with officials, and limiting the reporting to events that would be public knowledge and open to other participants.

- **Pathways**: One critical limitation here is laying claim to influence – where more subtle routes to influence may be far more effective. Demonstrating impact and visibilising interventions may, therefore, undermine potential impact. This is something for further discussion with the RPC's advisory group.

- **DFID Communications Workshop Aug 2007**: A challenge raised by several groups and in the plenary was that of attribution. Although on-going monitoring and the incorporation of qualitative methods was seen as going some way to allowing the attribution of policy influence to the actions of a particular team or project, this is an area that remains a challenge. In addition attribution in some circumstances is politically sensitive, and in others taking credit is inappropriate.

Gaps and challenges

In sum the following gaps and challenges emerge from the RPC strategies overall, in relation to M&E:

- Overall there is little knowledge of M&E methods that would be useful in helping the RPC to review their own **impact pathways** on an ongoing basis (e.g. Impact Pathways,[4] Outcome Mapping[5]), especially the ways in which they have an impact through collaboration and partnership with other networks/organisations. Most high-level reflection and learning around impact is usually relegated to mid-term reviews, carried out by external reviewers.

- Overall there is little knowledge of how to review and assess impact pathways **as an ongoing process**, before any significant impact has been achieved. In fact, in some cases the most substantive impact may only be achieved after the life of the RPC. These situations again call for methods such as Impact Pathways or Outcome Mapping in order to assess the process of establishing and nurturing impact pathways and partnerships.

- Overall there is little differentiation between the quality of **outputs**, **uptake** and **impact (i.e. change)**. Only a few RPC are trying to focus on and learn from actual changes that have come about, e.g. through Most Significant Change.[6]

- Overall there is little knowledge of how to monitor and evaluate **partnerships** or **networks**.

- Overall the RPC do not seem to be inspired by **DFID guidelines on M&E** in the same way that they have (mostly) taken up the DFID communication guidelines. This may be because the current DFID guidelines on M&E only focus on logframes (due to reporting requirements).

- The three M&E techniques mentioned here – **Impact Pathways, Outcome Mapping, and Most Significant Change** – were also mentioned in the Healthlink Scoping Study (Chetley and Perkins 2007).

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[4] On Impact Pathways, see *Making a Difference: M&E of Policy Research* (Ingie Hovland, ODI Working Paper 281, 2007), p. 8-13, available at www.odi.org.uk/publications/working_papers/wp281.pdf, or contact Boru Douthwaite at CIAT.

[5] On Outcome Mapping, see *Outcome Mapping; Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs* (S. Earl, F. Carden and T. Smutylo, IDRC, 2001), available at www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9330-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html.

[6] On Most Significant Change, see *The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use* (Rick Davies and J. Dart, 2005), available at www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf.

Chapter 3: RPC achievements with improved communication

This chapter draws on the desk review of outputs produced by the RPC. It presents the achievements of their focus on communication. The findings are grouped under the following headings: 3.1 Working practices; 3.2 Getting research taken up; and 3.3 Strengthening capacity. These findings are then compared with the results of a series of 'stories of change' collected around instances where RPC seem to have achieved policy impact, and/or to have changed the way they communicate their work.

3.1 Working practices

Is there any evidence that the greater attention and expenditure on communication is also being translated into qualitative changes in working practices?

Policy engagement: Stakeholder workshops

The RPC have overall shifted away from a dissemination model of communication towards a model of ongoing policy engagement. The slew of inception-phase **stakeholder meetings** that have been held marked the beginning of this process. DFID's guidelines on communication seem to have had a substantive input here.

- For example, the **Crisis States DRC** did not previously (before the RPC funding cycle) hold stakeholder meetings at the start of the research process. But since the new funding cycle for RPC was introduced, with the 10% minimum spend on communication, they have now held initial stakeholder meetings, and express satisfaction at the fact that the meetings have already sparked a great deal of interest in the research.

A typical account of these **initial stakeholder meetings** goes as follows:
- **RECOUP**: **Inception workshops** were held in the four southern partner countries in November (Kenya and Ghana), December (Pakistan) and January (India). During these workshops, a solid research design began to be developed that could be harmonised across all countries. They provided an opportunity for all of the southern partner team members to meet the RPC Director together with a varying group of six to eight members of the northern team. Two-day closed sessions were followed by a half or full day discussing emerging ideas with a set of **invited representatives** from other research institutions, NGOs, government officials and donor agencies. DFID representatives were invited to all, and attended the Ghana and Pakistan workshops. These 'open' sessions provided a prime opportunity to disseminate the aims and objectives of the project, and to receive feed-back on initial ideas. The workshops were followed, in early February, by a first meeting in Cambridge of the **Steering Committee**, comprising the Principal Investigators from all partner institutions. At this meeting principal investigators presented their draft research plans, which had been prepared in the light of discussions at the inception workshops and their subsequent planning activities. All partners report that Year 1 was a phase of **intensive networking** where contacts with government officials, NGOs, key informants and others were made or carried forward. The aims were to make adequate contacts in organisations at national, provincial and district levels so as to raise awareness of the proposed objectives of the RECOUP research and lay the ground for further engagement as **National Reference Groups** were established.

The stakeholder contacts meant that policy engagement became a default position in at least some RPC:

- **RaD**: As the action programmes arising from the national communications and advisory group workshops (in late 2007) are unlikely to start until 2008, it was also agreed that each of the country teams would identify one or two **interim activities to build dialogue** with stakeholders.

Policy engagement: Analysing policy processes

Several RPC have devoted research time to **improving their own ability to interact with stakeholders** and policy processes. For example:

- **CRISE** has published six 'policy context' or 'policy levers' papers for the international arena and five of their research countries. A selective list of target audiences is being developed, based on their relative importance in influencing decisions and the strength of existing connections, and they are determining: Who influences those targets; How they prefer to get information; How CRISE can fit into that process.

- **CREATE** teams have finalised four Country Analytic Reviews for Bangladesh, India, Ghana, and South Africa that explore the national policy environment, charting current status, reviewing recent research studies relevant to access and identifying gaps in research on policy and practice. The reviews have been launched at national events.

- **Citizenship DRC** has produced a synthesis paper by Joanna Wheeler entitled *Spaces for engagement: Understanding research and social change*.

- **CREHS**: Through examination of recent health sector reforms, we are seeking to identify the economic, political and institutional factors that have enabled or constrained policy implementation that preferentially benefits the poorest.

- **MHAPP**: One of the key outputs is knowledge generation on mental health policy development and the complex influences involved, followed by development and evaluation of interventions to strengthen the policy development process in the study countries.

- **EfA**: LSHTM and International HIV/AIDS Alliance agreed to organise a workshop on Policy Research Methods, with the dual objectives of introducing interested individuals within the programme to the basic principles and methods of policy research and initiating a discussion of potential research projects within Theme 4.

- **Young Lives**: There is not enough hard evidence currently available to provide the basis for the development of effective poverty reduction and social policies for children. Each of the four countries in the Young Lives project is in the process of identifying one priority policy/programme issue, and up to two provisional issues, from the new thematic sectors. The issues are derived from policy mapping.

- **Towards 4+5** is investigating the key priorities identified by maternal/neonatal health stakeholders, and describing the way stakeholders in the maternal/neonatal health field produce, acquire, interpret, value, and use scientific evidence and internationally-derived and promoted public health policies, using semi-structured interviews with opinion leaders.

Policy engagement: Practical examples

The following are a few of the many examples of what policy engagement looks like in practice in the RPC:

- **RiPPLE**: Learning and Practice Alliances (LPA) include water and sanitation system stakeholders (e.g. donors, service deliverers, practitioners, local government, etc.). LPA discussions have suggested that, while implementing agencies have considerable practical experience, they require additional support with research and learning activities. In particular local practitioners need assistance in documenting existing 'good practice'

and articulating their concerns to higher-level decision makers (government and donors). Establishing effective linkage between LPA platforms at different levels (local, regional, national) is thus a key priority for RiPPLE.

- **EfA**: In Malawi, close communication with MoH from the planning and inception phase of Operations Research projects has helped to design studies to meet current information gaps. Lighthouse has deliberately designed its clinical service within the constraints of the public health system in order to be able to conduct Operations Research that is relevant for Malawi and can be implemented nationally.

- **IFG**: One specific project in Kenya, related to the theme of accountability in service delivery, is planning to introduce an intervention to improve the functioning of school management committees, and measure its impact on a set of indicators. We are using an integrated approach, in which much effort has been expended to involve the government, up to the level of the Minister of Education. All experiments are conducted in government schools and the interventions used are selected and designed with close involvement of Ministry's top officials.

- **COMDIS**: In all COMDIS countries, the Director of the National Control Programme is a key partner, together with his or her immediate staff. This helps ensure that the research will deliver results that will be useful to the National Control Programme and that they have shared ownership of the results.

- **Towards 4+5**: Researcher Marge Koblinsky attends frequent meetings in Dhaka with MOH officials and Obstetric and Gynaecology Society of Bangladesh to discuss maternal health and survival, particularly developing maternal death audit, facility versus home based birth attendance.

- **Future Health Systems**: In Afghanistan the FHS team meets regularly with the with Ministry of Public Health and Afghanistan Public Health Institute representatives to share information and findings from all Johns Hopkins University and Indian Institute for Health Management Research projects going on in Afghanistan. The FHS team also meets regularly with the NGO sector providers, notably the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and JHPIEGO.

- **ABBA**: Research partner HEARD has remained engaged with the National Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS (NERCHA) in Swaziland through a process of mentoring.

Research: More demand-driven

Some RPC are grappling with the challenge of making their research more demand-driven. This is not simple, as CPRC notes:

- **CPRC**: Demand-led policy analysis represents an innovation. Significant work has to be put in to derive that demand, however, as policymakers are often not used to making demands of researchers. Exceptions are in India where the 11th 5-year plan process has absorbed considerable time of two core team members. In general, researchers (or non-researchers in the network) need to 'accompany' policy processes to be able to assess where useful contributions can be made. This is being done in Uganda in a systematic way, since the publication of the Uganda Chronic Poverty Report.

These are a few of the mechanisms that RPC have put in place to shift towards more demand-driven research:

- **RIU** is focusing on information markets, and how to integrate research findings into these markets. The focus will be on promoting information pull and encouraging information flows to be more user-driven.

- **RiPPLE** emphasises the role of regional LPAs in determining priorities and how the programme deploys resources at its disposal for action research. RiPPLE puts forward

the broad menu of options (finance, planning, growth etc.) and, with guidance from researchers, LPAs decide which of these, or aspects of these, they will work on.

- **CPRC** has resisted providing 100% funding (or near it) for any partner, as this would reduce the need for them to carry out 'demand-led' policy analysis work, building on their core CPRC work.

- **ABBA**: In Kenya, RATN has begun policy and programme dialogue with 28 organisations that aggravate or reduce the HIV threat for people with disabilities. Initial contacts have been established to extend the project to Ethiopia. The dialogue is informing research project design, capacity building needs and identifying policy gaps.

- **MHAPP**: In South Africa, a workshop was conducted with the Provincial Mental Health Coordinators and the national Directorate: Mental Health and Substance Abuse, in which preliminary findings from the RPC situation analysis were presented and proposals gathered for the intervention phase. A letter summarising these recommendations and making a set of formal proposals has now been sent to the national Director General in the Department of Health.

Citizenship DRC gives an interesting example of how their research findings were tailored to meet demands at a later stage:

- **Citizenship DRC**: Following a synthesis conference in 2005, researchers decided that there were still opportunities to communicate further the numerous outputs and findings of the Citizenship DRC and to promote policy dialogue with policymakers in countries where the DRC works. As part of the synthesis process, Rosalind Eyben and Sarah Ladbury reviewed a large portion of the Citizenship DRC's work from the last round. They conducted **interviews** with representatives of European donor agencies to discuss their **current concerns** and understand how the results of the Citizenship DRC's research could link to these. They produced a **policy paper**, entitled 'Building Effective States: Taking a Citizen's Perspective', which draws together many of the implications for donors from the research of the Citizenship DRC. The policy paper has since been used widely as background for discussion on current work, including at a DFID Social Development Advisors retreat, Oxfam UK, a coordinated donors' meeting in Bangladesh, Ford Foundation's India programme, municipal policymakers in Cape Town, among other examples.

Research: More applied

The shift towards applied research seems to have been especially significant for the health RPC, in order to distinguish their research from basic biomedical research.

- **Towards 4+5**: One of the RPC's stated goals is to conduct applied rather than basic biomedical research, and to consider the potential for scaling up and programmatic implementation.

- **EfA**: This RPC asks research questions that are highly applied with an operations research focus. This will help us to maintain constant contact with the users of our research.

Research: More multi-disciplinary

Some RPC have actively invested in multi-disciplinary teams. For example:

- **MHAPP**: The 'big idea' behind MHAPP is that the negative cycle between poverty and mental ill-health can only be broken through national (and at times international) policies that provide a comprehensive multi-sectoral approach to the problem – including evidence-based, cost-effective mental health interventions as well as policies that address mental health and social welfare, criminal justice, housing, education and labour.

- **Young Lives**: Aims to produce an overall picture of children's lives as opposed to information only on health or education. The research consortium includes political scientists, anthropologists, economists, sociologists, pediatricians, public health specialists and psychologists from all four research countries.
- **SRH & HIV**: The greatest strength of the Consortium is its ability to bring a wide range of disciplines – including epidemiology, health economics, modeling, social, clinical and microbiological sciences – to bear on a particular problem.

Research: Towards open access

The financial cost of accessing a lot of academic publishing (especially in journals) has long been a problem for Southern researchers. There are many ongoing efforts to make published outputs freely available over the internet, e.g. the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) has set up the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI). Some RPC have become engaged in this issue:

- **Towards 4+5** state that they will monitor whether their published articles are available in open access journals.
- **Effective Health Care**: Lack of free/open access to published material is a key concern for policymakers and practitioners in the South in general and the Cochrane network is working to actively overcome this.

Collaboration: North-South

The partnership between Northern and Southern research institutions is clearly an important feature of the RPC model, and one that has helped to drive several of the shifts mentioned above (e.g. stakeholder engagement, greater understanding of national policy processes, more demand-driven and applied research, and the shift towards open access). More will be said about this in the section below on capacity building. In relation to working practices, the partnerships have been used by some RPC in a shift towards **breaking with some of the traditionally exclusive practices** of Western academia. For example:

- **EdQual**: The stereotypical model of research in Africa has been for Northern partners to lead conceptually and for Southern partners to 'implement'. EdQual aims to break with this pattern. In the EdQual RPC, Northern partners have had to balance being responsive to African priorities with being proactive in using their expertise to facilitate and progress plans. The RPC has had to modify its capacity strengthening plans to take account of the challenges posed by the devolved model, with the aim of having Southern partner institutions lead on thematic research.
- **Pathways**: A pledge that was made at the outset and to which the RPC remains passionately committed, is to change the balance of all of our reading lists from featuring North American and British theorists with case material that is largely drawn from our regions, to internationalising the mix of materials, and building up a resource of readings and writings by theorists from the global South. We will work towards this not only through curricular exchange and the production of materials that can be used for teaching by Pathways researchers, but also through a wider programme of support for the production of theoretical/conceptual writing that has its origins in the global South.

Collaboration: South-South

South-South collaboration through the RPC will also be addressed further below in the section on capacity building. Here it is important to note that South-South collaboration is also part of a wider shift in working practices. For example:

- **Future Health Systems**: China and India share many health systems challenges now and in the future. RPC partners CHEI (China) and IIHMR (India) will collaborate closely

through the consortium. Specific possibilities include electronic and face-to-face communication between stakeholder groups and wider networks, synthesis and sharing of lessons learned, sharing successful communications models such as the China Health Development Forum, exchanges of staff and stakeholders for lesson learning and exploring opportunities for collaboration.

Collaboration: Across RPC

Many of the RPC collaborate with other RPC in a variety of ways. For example:

- **Realising Rights**: Links are already established with **Future Health Systems**, **Pathways** and **SRH & HIV** RPC through our shared partnerships. These links will enable us to increase our influence with shared target audiences
- There is close contact between **Pathways** and **WEMC**, who both work on gender issues.
- **RECOUP** has held a joint methodology workshop in Cambridge with **CPRC**.

Some people are involved in more than one RPC and are able to 'cross-fertilise' ideas. For example:

- **SRH & HIV**: Cross-RPC communication and collaboration is being strengthened, in particular with the **Realising Rights** RPC, which shares LSHTM staff and various research activities, **CREHS**, and with **EfA**. We will continue to develop these links, for example regarding engagement with the media and the community.
- One of the senior researchers in **CSRC** (Jo Beall) is on the external Centre Advisory Review Group of the **CPRC**.

RPC based in the same lead institution meet with each other:

- RPC within LSHTM (**SRH & HIV**, **EfA**, **CREHS**, and **TARGETS**) meet twice a year to share experiences.
- **Pathways** (based at IDS) has already worked closely with two of the other IDS-based RPC (**Realising Rights** and **Citizenship DRC**) and is exploring areas of mutual interest with two of the other Sussex/IDS-based RPC (**CREATE**, **Future State**).

Cross-RPC collaboration also takes place in-country:

- All three education RPC (**RECOUP**, **EdQual**, and **CREATE**) are operating in Ghana, where they have formed a National Reference Group chaired by the Chief Director of the Ministry of Education and Sports. The National Reference Group, which comprises representatives of the Education and Health Ministries, NGOs, in-country DfID and other international donor institutions, is to provide a forum for disseminating RPC research findings to policymakers.
- The **Pathways** Team in Bangladesh is now sharing offices with the **Citizenship DRC** Team in Bangladesh (BRAC).

Collaboration: Seeking multiplier funding

Virtually all RPC are pursuing multiplier funding and most seem to be generating it. A few examples include:

- **CPRC**: Multi-donor support for the second Chronic Poverty Report has been useful to get advance buy-in to the project.
- **IFG's** financial plan includes US co-funding from the Hewlett Foundation and the Open Society Institute which has been directly allocated to IFG's African partners.
- **SRH & HIV**: Has raised more than £6.80 million in "multiplier" funds, much of it for capacity building in Tanzania.

Collaboration: Creating synergy effects

Since almost all RPC researchers are simultaneously involved in other research projects and networks, there is ample opportunity to draw on related research for the RPC, and to introduce RPC findings into other research fora. A few examples include:

- **EfA**: Will use the following terminology to identify how research relates to the programme: (1) Evidence for Action-*generated*: Directly arising from or generated by the programme. These projects may be funded entirely by the programme (e.g. Situation Assessment), or co-funded by the programme (e.g. by providing time of staff who are paid by the programme) and other sources. (2) Evidence for Action-*related*: Projects involving programme staff within consortium partner institutions and that are directly related to at least one of the programme's research themes or other objectives (e.g. capacity strengthening or communications) but have not been directly generated by the programme.

- **CREATE** works closely with other organisations, e.g. a team member is being seconded to the Global Monitoring Report as a Senior Policy Analyst, one research partner is a UKFIET trustee, and the Director advises the World Bank SEIA programme.

The synergy effects that can be created from these multiple involvements can have a positive impact on the opportunities of the RPC. For example:

- **CREATE**: By January 2008, over 100 researchers were involved in CREATE across seven main partner institutions. The activities of these researchers are central to CREATE's communication strategy since they project on-going research work through their own networks, through their teaching of graduate students, and through their related academic publications.

- **RaD**: The interests of Muslim development NGOs are being explored through a joint programme with Islamic Relief 'UK Muslim NGOs Talking', which has involved mapping the organisations and is currently building dialogue among them. The programme has been requested to facilitate a series of regional workshops with Islamic development NGOs based in the UK in 2006/7, to explore their understanding of development issues and potentially build their capacity for policy analysis.

- **Realising Rights**: A major development was the setting up of a funded centre on gender based violence and health at the LSHTM, led by Professor Charlotte Watts, an RPC researcher. This will provide an 'umbrella' for RPC work on the links between SRH and gender-based violence in respect of technical support to proposal development and capacity strengthening in this area. Several partners are actively developing research proposals in this area.

Collaboration: Thinking long-term

A few of the RPC are actively thinking about how linkages that are established as part of the RPC might be made sustainable beyond the lifetime of the RPC. This will be expanded on below in the section on capacity strengthening. For example:

- **IPPG**: Multi-stakeholder national 'learning group' fora have been set up in each research country. These will continue throughout the programme – and beyond if, as we intend, they are felt to be of value to participants. Over the lifetime of the programme it is anticipated that as many of the participants as possible will become closely involved in the research activities, and thereby develop a sense of 'co-ownership' so as to communicate and promote its findings.

Communication: Adopting differentiated approaches

All RPC have reflected – at least on paper – on how to adopt differentiated communication approaches in different contexts. One of the most articulate examples comes from WEMC, but the gist of it is typical across all RPC:

▪ **WEMC** employ a range of different communication models, depending on the context. For example: (1) Classic, knowledge-driven model: a phased, linear view that research findings are to be obtained first before they are communicated to impel action – WEMC has found this approach to be most appropriate for politically sensitive contexts, for example, in China and Iran, where relatively safer spaces exist for academics than for activists. (2) Problem-solving, policy-driven model: another phased, linear view that begins with the end-users of research and the problems they face, before tracking back in search of useful findings – this approach is being used by WEMC researchers with considerable research-cum-advocacy experience, who are keen to focus on specific policy targets and so are researching how to bring about intended changes. This approach is used, in particular, by WEMC researchers working with Indonesian women migrant workers. (3) In Pakistan they are using a more interactive model where ongoing policy dialogues set up feedback between policy-makers and researchers.

Communication: Channelling additional funding into communication

The importance given to communication in some RPC can also be detected from the willingness of some of the lead institutions to subsidise the RPC communication costs:

▪ **SRH & HIV**: Has employed two part-time RPC communications officers, one paid for by LSHTM in 2007.

▪ **IFG**: A private institution in the US is funding the upgrade of communication at the Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE) in Oxford where IFG is based, and this will contribute towards a communications officer for CSAE and the RPC.

Communication: Seeking additional training

Another sign that some RPC take communication seriously is their willingness to seek out and invest in additional training in this area. For example:

▪ **EfA**: As the International HIV AIDS Alliance have much experience in this area, with expertise in many different aspects of communication, they play an important advisory role to the RPC Communications Manager. Examples of where they have already provided support to the consortium include providing guidance on setting up Communities of Practice, and providing training at the Communication Workshop.

▪ **COMDIS**: RPC researchers will be supported through involving organisations with specific expertise, such as the British Library for Development Studies and Malaria Consortium on managing information resources, IDS on disseminating research in accessible formats, and SciDev on working with the media, to work with the researchers to develop capacity.

▪ **EfA**: In order to increased capacity of partner institutions in effective communication of research, the RPC held a workshop entitled 'Policy & Research: Translating Evidence into Action' in April 2007, which was attended by staff from each of the partner institutions. It examined issues of influencing policy as well as methods for policy research. This part of the workshop was led by partner institute IHAA, who have considerable experience in communicating research and influencing policy. This area has been identified as a priority by the consortium, and work has been done on planning a capacity building workshop on communication, which will build skills, and facilitate the development of country communications strategies and action plans. This workshop will be held in Brighton in October 2007, and will involve expert facilitators and leaders from outside of the consortium, as well from as within it.

Communication: Liaising with the media

All RPC use the media as part of their communication strategy. Some pay particular attention to how their activities and research findings might attract the interest of journalists. A few examples include:

- **EdQual**: Consultation Workshops were held in each of the African member institutions in order to identify the knowledge needs of policy makers. In Ghana and Tanzania, these were reported extensively in the leading English language newspapers (the Daily Graphic in Ghana and in Tanzania). In Tanzania, they were also reported in television news programmes. In UK, the consortium has been publicised through press releases in the Guardian, on the BBC website and in the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES).

- **PISCES**: The Communications Working Group will provide news and human interest feature tips to journalists. The CWG will consider organising site visits that would give journalists the opportunity to ground-truth findings; these could be the best and the worst examples of bioenergy development.

- **MHAPP**: In Uganda a good number of staff from the media (both print and electronic) took part as respondents in the inception-phase semi-structured interviews, which has led to an increase in advocacy and publicity for the project.

Others actively nourish various connections with the media, sometimes through third parties:

- **Pathways**: Our partnership with the current affairs website openDemocracy has given rise to a series of short, accessible articles which are being widely read, and a set of associated podcasts.

- **Realising Rights**: BRAC has been training women journalists in national print media on SRHR issues through the Salma Sobhan fellowships programme (funded by a trust set up by the Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen). Each journalist then chose a topic of interest in SRHR for an article. These were published in national or regional newspapers and also formed the basis for a book chapter on 'citizen's voices' produced by the Bangladesh Health Watch group, a civil society initiative to monitor health in the country. Simultaneously, the RPC has been collaborating with the PANOS RELAY project, working with journalists in the south. Their remit is communicating research through the media. Supervised by IDS staff, and using RPC partners as critical readers, a review was produced on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights: Universal access to services, one of the Realising Rights research themes. This review is on the Realising Rights website (www.realising-rights.org/docs/SRH%20Literature%20review.pdf). This formed the basis of a media resource pack for journalists on this topic in March 2007 which is being distributed through PANOS in Southern and Eastern Africa and South Asia. This initiative is now being linked to BRAC through the PANOS office in Dhaka and the media pack is being translated into Bangla. This media pack is on the front page of the PANOS website (www.panos.org.uk).

Communication: Using stories and thinking innovatively

Finally, several RPC have also introduced innovative or more accessible communication components. For many this relates to collating and communicating **stories** that are accessible to a wide range of audiences:

- **RiPPLE**: One of the communication outputs is written Stories from the Field, small reports about implementation, operation and maintenance of WSS services from community, woreda and regional level perspective.

- **WEMC**: Success stories of women's empowerment will be collated and readied for use by different media – some for a general public, some for more specialized audiences.

An example of innovative thinking around communication **infomediaries** is given by RIU:

▪ **RIU**: The RPC is providing specific information to farmers through greater engagement with **small businessmen and SMEs** – particularly the village-based agro-vet dealers, local foundries and other local service providers; these uniquely placed institutions who currently provide poor communities with goods and services are currently largely unutilised by innovation platforms for relaying information in response to community demand. Similarly, **micro-credit companies/rural banks** tend to provide poor rural/urban communities with incentives to take risk such as high interest loans – but do not currently provide guidance on improved agricultural practices – as they do in the north. We are also in early discussions with some of the **mobile phone providers** in East Africa, e.g. Safari.com, to stimulate their interest in including RNRRS-type outputs in their data-banks as a complementary service for those farmers who wish to source information on emerging/new 'technologies' on request.

Some RPC are also using **film, photographs, blogs, drama**, and other similar outputs. As mentioned above, **Citizenship DRC** has invested in **participatory video-making**. Pathways has made extensive use of similar channels:

▪ **Pathways**: We hope to support fundraising for a series of **exchanges** – between feminist NGOs doing action research on women's reproductive and sexual rights and voice in politics; between women local government councillors in neighbouring countries; between women in positions of influence in the executive branch of government; and between religious scholars. We've also ventured into **documentary film-making** with young directors and producers, in collaboration with Screen South and with advisors including a Channel 4 commissioning editor. This collaboration will produce four 3-minute documentaries on Pathways research which we are hoping will be broadcast to a wide audience – Tessa (Communications Officer) is currently in talks with Channel Four on this. A highly successful competition was held for **amateur photographers** to submit photos of changing images of women in Bangladesh. A touring **exhibition** has attracted audiences of different kinds, and provoked debate on what's changed in women's lives. NEIM in Brazil are training young interns in the use of photography to record their lives in the 'Changing Times, Changing Lives' project. Renowned photojournalists have been commissioned by the RPC to work with our West Africa partners to build capacities for photojournalism. Next year we're planning to sponsor the use of Pathways narratives to produce **dramas and fictional writing**. Hania Sholkamy and partners in Egypt are planning a training workshop for **bloggers**. Our communications strategy strives to be as utterly different from the kind of development narratives that bureaucrats tell us they are bored of hearing: to pack a punch, as well as to captivate and delight.

Gaps and challenges

▪ Encouraging and strengthening **North-South** and **South-South collaboration** that breaks with previous patterns and works towards Southern research leadership is a challenging task. Overall it seems many RPC are hoping to work towards this aim, but are doing it with varying success. This will be addressed further in the section below on capacity strengthening.

▪ Overall it seem like a few more RPC might benefit from considering more 'innovative' forms of communication, even if this only means producing **stories** that can effectively communicate core issues to different audiences.

▪ Overall it is not made explicit in the RPC documentation what kind of **incentives** are offered within the RPC in order to encourage and sustain the shifts towards the above working practices. This is an important issue to learn more about, considering that the in-built incentives of the UK and US academic systems (which reward publications in peer-

reviewed journals, and monographs) in many ways run counter to the working practices that the RPC model is meant to foster.

3.2 Getting research taken up

What kinds of achievement have been recorded in getting research taken up? This section lists examples given by the RPC of situations where their research findings have been picked up, solicited and/or used in policy formulation or implementation.

International policy and practice: Bi/multilaterals

Examples in which RPC research has been picked up:
- **TARGETS**: RPC researcher Professor Cairncross wrote the chapter on water, sanitation and hygiene promotion in the second edition of Disease Control Priorities in Developing Countries, published by the World Bank. We know that senior policymakers are reading it carefully, because within weeks of its publication, the World Bank's Senior Sanitation Adviser sought clarification on the costing calculations.
- **SRH & HIV**: The Cleland-Sinding Lancet paper on low condom use has been circulated within DFID, World Bank, Dutch embassies in Africa, and WHO.
- **Towards 4+5**: The United Nations Subcommittee on Nutrition held a workshop to discuss the implications of our micronutrient supplementation trial in Nepal (and others) in June 2006.
- **Future Health Systems**: (a) The Future Health System overview paper was used in the World Bank Health, Nutrition & Population strategy to define key challenges for work on health systems, including the linkage of AIDS and health systems, a focus on financial protection, and an approach to improving the evidence base on health systems. The RPC Director has been part of the World Bank team writing the new Health, Nutrition & Population strategy. (b) The initial writings of the consortium have also been used to change the health systems strengthening dimensions of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria, as well as in discussions of how to strengthen health systems through GAVI. Again the RPC Director has been part of the advisory group on how to better address health systems concerns in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, as well as part of the team drafting World Bank recommendations for health systems strengthening in GAVI proposals.
- **TARGETS**: Another lesson of the last year has been that stakeholders can often see wider potential for application than we do in our innovations. For example, we developed a new criterion of immunogenicity to overcome a practical problem encountered in the field during meningitis vaccine trials; since some individuals in the West African 'meningitis belt' already had relatively high antibody titres at baseline, seroconversion could not be defined for them in the same way as for those with no previous exposure. It was our WHO colleagues who saw the application of this principle to diagnosis as well as to trials, and to infectious diseases other than meningitis.

Examples of instances where RPC have been asked to provide information:
- **TARGETS**: We have produced two documents this year for the WHO Global Malaria Programme: one was presented by WHO at the 2nd High Level Donors' Meeting in Paris (August 2005) as the way forward recommended by WHO and UNICEF to scale up ITNs.
- **Effective Health Care**: (a) The Cochrane Infectious Diseases Group is in touch with WHO about standards for medicines in diarrhoea, and with TDR for advice on the

amodiaquine-artesunate review. (b) The RPC China team is in dialogue with WHO China and World Bank Washington around the adherence rate and direct observation in TB.

- **Future State**: Links between tax and governance were a major focus of work under phase 1. Tax used to be seen as an issue for technical experts. Slowly over the past decade there has been growing interest – initially among a relatively small group of staff in DFID and the World Bank – in the tax relationship and its implications for state-society relations more broadly. Over the last 12-18 months there has been an acceleration of interest and activity, involving a wider group of policymakers (economists as well as governance advisers; specialists from the IMF and the International Tax Dialogue as well as generalists; a growing number of bilateral donors; and NGO networks such as the International Budget Project). The decision by the DAC Govnet group to adopt tax and governance as a work theme for 2007 has further increased visibility and momentum. IDS has been invited to prepare the policy paper to guide this work.

- **WEMC**: In 2007 UNIFEM invited the WEMC Director to present two seminars in the *UNIFEM Executive Director's Seminar Series*. The WEMC Director has also been asked by UNIFEM, UNRISD, and the Heinrich Böll Foundation to provide inputs on a new UNRISD-UNIFEM project on 'fundamentalisms'.

- **Pathways**: The RPC Director spent a day with Swedish Embassy staff in Dhaka exploring issues of voice, responsiveness and empowerment in Swedish co-operation in Bangladesh, which provided an opportunity to share Pathways materials and thinking.

Examples of where RPC findings have influenced implementation:

- **TARGETS**: The results of our study of IPTi in Ghana were used by UNICEF to obtain funding from the Gates Foundation to conduct an IPTi implementation trial in four countries, including Ghana.

- **SRH & HIV**: Our demonstration that new rapid point-of-care tests for syphilis are sensitive, specific and easy to perform, led to them being made available at a fraction of their previous cost through the WHO bulk procurement programme.

One RPC notes that some of the types of reviews that the RPC is able to carry out fills a gap in the current funding climate:

- **TARGETS**: By underwriting the salaries of TARGETS staff, DFID enables us to carry out much of this work as short-term consultancies or as *pro bono* advisory work. This fills a major funding gap, as it is notoriously difficult to find other sources of support for such operational research, particularly research on the effectiveness of delivery systems as opposed to the efficacy of interventions.

DFID policy

While a few RPC note individual cases of mis-communication with DFID country offices, on the whole most RPC seem to have established at least a minimum amount of good contact with relevant DFID staff. Examples of further interaction and influence include:

- **RiPPLE**: Communication with the DFID-seconded adviser to the Ethiopian Ministry of Water Resources has been excellent and he has presented to a number of the partner meetings.

- **Migration DRC**: The Migration DRC has been working closely with the DFID migration team, meeting the team once every quarter. The publication of the migration policy paper this year is indicative of the influence the Migration DRC has had in influencing the thinking in DFID on migration.

- **Future State**: DFID has acknowledged the impact of DRC work on chapters 2 & 3 of the 2006 White Paper. Chapter 3 on 'Supporting Governance Internationally' draws directly on the DRC's work, showing how aspects of the global environment exacerbate

governance problems in poor countries. Once again, interest and awareness has built up gradually over a period of years, fed by the DRC research; work by other scholars on the 'resource curse'; and campaigns by organisations such as Global Witness.

- **CREATE** has directly interacted with DFID advisors in country, and in the UK at the Education Advisors retreat (February) and the Sussex Reading Week (October) and is advising on the development of DFID's 2008 education strategy.

Health RPC have also influenced UK policy:

- **SRH & HIV**: In May 2006, RPC researcher John Cleland gave evidence on population growth, family planning and MDGs to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Population and Reproductive Health. Consortium members also contributed written evidence.

- **Realising Rights**: In the UK, since the Population Forum series organised by LSHTM in parallel to the UK APPG Hearing, the increase in the number of Parliamentary questions and debates in both Houses has been noticeable with MPs drawing directly on material presented during the series. Gareth Thomas, a Minister for International Development, in his speech at the final forum series, explicitly acknowledged the need for the UK Government to revitalise the family planning agenda as a central tenet of poverty reduction – something we regard as a major breakthrough.

National policy

Examples where RPC have influenced new legislation and/or implementation:

- **IFG**: In March 2007 RPC Director Collier visited Sierra Leone as a guest of the government and recommended specific actions on the auctioning of mineral rights. As a result, the government has prepared draft legislation.

- **Towards 4+5**: The Nepali government has implemented a national maternity care financing scheme using the evidence and recommendations from our health economics research in this area.

- **Migration DRC** partner RMMRU (Bangladesh) is serving on a three-member technical committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs to draft the National Plan of Action against Trafficking of Women and Children.

- **COMDIS**: RPC operational research findings have been incorporated into a case management guideline, which has been adopted by the China national TB programme. A participatory in-service training module has been developed, evaluated and revised. The deskguide is to be used to train all TB Doctors in China, and is helping to operationalise the new WHO TB Strategy.

- **MHAPP**: Preliminary findings from the RPC's situation analysis in Zambia have been used by the Zambia Ministry of Health to develop a national Strategic Plan for Mental Health in Zambia for 2007-2011.

- **EfA**: RPC partner Lighthouse's operations research into PMTCT monitoring and evaluation has led to a national consensus to modify health passports in Malawi, in order to include data for HIV status and Nevirapine use for women and their exposed infants.

An example of new implementation being considered:

- **EfA**: Lessons on good practice from the Evidence for Action-related TAZAMA programme in Tanzania include: (1) amending ART clinic records to show date of next appointment to identify late attendees; (2) using local VCT counsellors to take blood samples to remote ART clinics for repeat CD4 counts to save clients journeys and waiting time; (3) having a dedicated nurse at the city ART clinic to meet and greet rural clients who do not understand clinic procedures and cannot read directions. These

innovations are being considered by the National AIDS Control Programme for wider implementation.

Examples of RPC being asked to contribute to national-level committees:

- **WEMC**: In Indonesia the SCN WEMC Coordinator and another key WEMC researcher were invited to sit on the National Commission on Violence Against Women.
- **Pathways**: RPC partner NEIM (Brazil) created quite a stir after last year's Carnival parade protest against the failure of the State Governor to create a Secretariat for Women's Policies – featured on YouTube, to popular acclaim. NEIM has now been approached to work with the State and Federal Governments on women's policies. Researcher Cecilia Sardenberg has been invited to join the Advisory Committees of the Federal Government Special Secretary for Women's Policies, the Pro-Gender Equity Programme and the Women and Science network. Terezinha Goncalves is co-ordinator of the Advisory Group to the Executive Inter-Institutional Executive Group that is putting together the policy implementation plan for women in the state of Bahia.

Some RPC are actively influencing how policy issues are discussed at national level through new input, terms or frameworks:

- **CREATE**: In Ghana the Chair of CREATE's NRG is the current Chief Director of the Ministry of Education (MOESS), he is also an Ed D student at Sussex and a periodic visitor. A Ghanaian CREATE team member is a Senior Lecturer at Sussex, former Director of the Institute of Education in Ghana, and a co-author of the Ghana Country Analytic Review. Several CREATE meetings have taken place in the MOESS and other venues in Ghana with senior officials including the Head of Planning and senior advisors to the government, and with other stakeholders. The MOESS is printing, publishing, and disseminating the Country Analytic Review. This is already affecting how access issues are being discussed and how budgeting and other aspects of the proposed reforms in Ghana are being profiled.
- **CREATE**: The CREATE conceptualisation of zones of exclusion (from education) is entering into policy dialogue. CREATE's developing agenda is also promoting a reordering of policy priorities in the education sector.

Several RPC have at some time or other been invited to provide information to national-level policymakers, which may lead to changes in policy in the future:

- **CREATE, South Africa**: In South Africa a Ministerial Committee has been set up to review issues of retention in the South African education system to which CREATE was asked to make a submission at a meeting at the DoE in Pretoria on 13 June 2007. Paul Kgobe attended a HSRC 'Round-Table on Youth Policy' on 21 Nov 2007 in Pretoria, South Africa at which Gugu Nyanda, Chair of the Ministerial Committee on Learner Retention made direct reference to CREATE. CREATE was also invited to present its research to the Guateng Department of Education in November 2007 to 30 senior officials.
- **CREATE, India**: In India the Director of CREATE presented an analytic paper at the invitation of the Ministry of Human Resource Development on secondary access and expansion which was hosted by the All India Joint Secretary for Secondary Education, which has resulted in an invitation to support analytic work on the expansion of secondary education.
- **CREATE, Ghana**: The CREATE Partner met for three hours with 100 Ghanaian parliamentarians including the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and the Minority Leader of Parliament to discuss universalising access by 2015.

- **TARGETS**: The outputs from the TNVS monitoring and evaluation research, and our work on household surveys in Ghana and Uganda have already and will continue to provide the national malaria programme managers with the knowledge they require to extend and improve their programmes for equitable and sustainable delivery of ITNs. We shall continue to monitor these programmes.

There are many instances of ongoing dialogues. Effective Health Care provides the most thorough list:

- **Effective Health Care**: (a) The China team is in dialogue with Ministry of Health on the use of systematic reviews for informing health systems policies, including health insurance. (b) There is an ongoing dialogue between the Indian Council for Medical Research, the RPC Partner in Vellore and RPC Director about systematic reviews and relevance to policy. (c) South Africa: dialogue between RPC Partner and MoH about nutrition in HIV and TB. (d) Nigeria: RPC partner dialogue with MoH for establishing national policy for malaria treatment; and policy around malaria in pregnancy. (e) Philippines: RPC partner dialogue with MoH around adherence in TB, and this led to a small survey, financed through the RPC, to evaluate mobile phone ownership in TB patients. (f) Kazan: RPC partner dialogue with MoH Tatarstan in guideline development – currently in stroke management.

State/district policy

Examples where RPC have influenced new legislation and/or implementation:

- **Young Lives**: The Young Lives India policy team worked closely with the Christian Children's Fund and Department of Women and Children's Welfare to coordinate the consultation, drafting and production of the Andhra Pradesh State Plan of Action for Children. The process involved close interaction with other civil society organisations and government departments, and ended with a public launch of the Plan by the newly appointed Minister.

- **Towards 4+5**: Knowledge of our work in Malawi led The Health Foundation to contact us for advice in setting up a quality of care project in Malawi. We have now been awarded funding to evaluate this study, being implemented by Women and Children First, IHI and LATH, in collaboration with the MoH, Malawi. This project aims to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity in three districts of Malawi, through the implementation of a quality improvement programme at district facilities and in the community, working with women's groups.

- **ABBA**: In South Africa, the completed study under the project on Emotional Development and Quality of Life of Vulnerable Children and Orphans has assisted Amangwe village in KwaZulu Natal to identify useful norms and standards for OVC interventions such as crèches and play groups. The findings are being disseminated to other OVC programmes in uThungulu District and are shaping further development of OVC services in the local area.

Civil society

Examples where RPC have been asked to provide research findings:

- **RECOUP**: Action Aid Ghana, GNECC and Ibis have approached RPC partner AFC to ask for assistance in helping to produce research for influencing policy. Similarly, in India, the NCEUS has indicated its interest in our partner's (CORD) work on the outcomes of education and training in the informal sector.

Examples where RPC are collaborating with civil society organisations:

- **WEMC**: Keen interest has been expressed by some institutions to be involved in what they consider to be the innovative work of WEMC, especially regarding women's empowerment. For example, in Pakistan, WEMC partner AKU has received such indications of interest from at least four civil society organisations.

- **Future Health Systems**: The RPC's principle investigator in Bangladesh has worked with a group of civil society opinion-leaders to launch a health watch programme to monitor the overall progress of the health sector in the country.

The media and public debates

Examples where RPC have been able to use meetings and the media to help shape public debates:

- **SRH & HIV**: We presented our findings on herpes treatment for HIV prevention to national stakeholders in Burkina Faso and Ghana, with participation of experts from WHO Afro and WHO-Headquarters. There was important national media coverage of both events (TV and radio national news, and a substantial half-page article (with colour photo) in the main Ghanaian daily paper, *The Daily Graphic*.

- **Realising Rights** research partner APHRC (Kenya) and the Faculty of Law, University of Dar es Salaam, convened a public/scholarly engagement seminar to promote dialogue on sexuality at the Landmark Hotel in Dar es Salaam on 26 March 2007. This meeting, entitled "Sexuality, Law and Culture in Africa," was part of APHRC's programme on sexuality in sub-Saharan Africa. Around 150 people attended, including many students, some media representatives, and some NGO representatives. The meeting successfully initiated dialogue among participants who had not engaged critically with concepts such as 'gender' and 'sexuality' before. Early on in the meeting, there was considerable controversy but by the end of the meeting there was increased consensus that the ideas could be discussed, and participants appeared to be more open to the concepts presented. Student participants were hungry for information on sexuality research, taking all the resources distributed (including papers presented and the BRIDGE briefings on Sexuality). After the event, about 40 participants emailed the organisers asking for copies of presentations. A representative of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Gender attended, and there was coverage from Tanzanian radio, TV and print media.

As a reminder of how difficult such achievements can be, Realising Rights also gives a **negative example** of a similar meeting that was judged too controversial for the media to report it:

- **Realising Rights** research partner APHRC (Kenya) participated in a media consultative meeting organised by the International Women Media Foundation (IWMF) on International Women's Day this year. The theme was violence against women. There were several journalists present and various speakers shared findings on violence against women, but none of the findings received any coverage in the media.

Prestigious academic circles

Finally, below are just a few examples of some of the more prestigious academic circles where RPC findings have been introduced:

- **CREATE**: Agreement has been reached to develop a special issue of the prestigious *Comparative Education* for publication in 2008/9 with contributions from nine CREATE team members. The focus will be on access issues in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- **Towards 4+5**: RPC members co-ordinated the *Lancet Maternal Health Series* published in September/October 2006 (funded by DFID, USAID via IMMPACT and WHO) and launched in both London and Washington DC. The *Lancet* has subsequently approached

RPC members to lead on writing a new series on integration of maternal, neonatal and child health services.

- **Realising Rights**: RPC LSHTM researchers' *Lancet* article on sexual behaviour (Wellings et al. 2006) attracted a lot of attention from the UK print media and radio/TV. Emma Slaymaker gave interviews on this work to BBC World Service for Brazil, BBC Three Counties Radio and The Breakfast Show on Radio New Zealand.

- **SRH & HIV**: The results on herpes treatment for HIV prevention were presented at several high-level workshops and conferences, including: a workshop organised by WHO and CDC to review HIV care guidelines in Montreux in June 2006, at a large meeting of STI experts and programme managers at WHO Geneva in July 2006, as well as at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, Denver, February 2006. The results will be presented at the International AIDS Conference in Toronto in August 2006, and at IUSTI European Conference, Versailles, in October 2006. Several publications are being prepared or have been submitted.

3.3 Strengthening capacity

What kinds of achievement have been recorded in strengthening capacity among researchers and those intermediaries playing a role in uptake? The RPC are strengthening capacity in different ways, ranging from individual communication capacity towards strengthening Southern research leadership.

Individual research and communication skills

All RPC are engaged in ongoing interaction between the research partners that allows for sharing research skills, editing skills, and communication skills. A few examples include:

- **CREATE**: A number of CREATE's staff have not been involved in writing policy briefs previously, and the team sees this as an opportunity to hone these skills in its researchers.

- **Effective Health Care**: For the Cochrane Infectious Diseases Group, 10 authors from middle and low income countries completed their first Cochrane review during the period (2006/07); and 13 authors completed their protocols – representing an induction to the Cochrane process. During this period, substantive training was carried out in Vellore (protocol and review workshops) and in Cape Town (Reviewers for Africa Programme).

- **MHAPP**: At a training workshop in Cape Town in 2007, Research Officers were trained in qualitative data analysis (using Nvivo), integrating analysis of quantitative and qualitative instruments, academic writing, and the use of citation software (Reference Manager). The Workshop also provided an opportunity for all partners to develop their coding frames and led to a compilation of an agreed coding frame that was entered into Nvivo and circulated to research officers to use in a flexible way, to integrate emerging themes.

- **WEMC**: Training has commenced for over 100 researchers for undertaking research on women's empowerment in the nodal countries and in cross-border research, with 90% actively involved in the research, including multi-media documentation.

- **Migration DRC** is creating a space for the more experienced partners (Bangladesh on networks and Egypt on partnerships) to hold training sessions at the next RPC partners meeting in April 2007.

- Some RPC, including all three education RPC (**CREATE**, **EdQual**, **RECOUP**) provide PhD scholarships tied to the RPC research. A few RPC (e.g. **IPPG**) also offer post-docs tied to their research.

Towards Southern research leadership

International academic circles are largely Western-dominated, as are many international development organisations. The RPC can potentially serve an important function by facilitating and strengthening the process of having **Southern voices and perspectives** enter both international academic fora and international development policy processes. This may in turn strengthen the **status and leverage of Southern research institutions** in the policy processes in their own countries. Several of the RPC are incorporating activities, arrangements and training events that contribute to this larger aim of **strengthening Southern research leadership**.

This starts at a very basic level with addressing the challenge of uneven **access to software and publications**. The effort of some RPC to promote open access publishing was mentioned above. Another example is RECOUP's decision to invest in software:

- **RECOUP**: Arrangements are being made to purchase EndNote for all partners, and possibilities for purchasing SPSS and ATLAS.ti for qualitative and quantitative data analysis are being explored.

Some RPC are actively promoting the sharing of knowledge on how to **write** for internationally recognised academic journals (which also ties in to how to frame research funding proposals). For example:

- **Future State**: The RPC aims to assist particularly younger researchers in partner institutions not only to write for policymaker audiences, but also to publish in credible academic journals. A writeshop held at IDS in June 2006 was part of the process of achieving this aim. As the writeshop was well received a further one will be held in 2007.

- **IFG**: Even some of the best Southern based researchers still find it hard to get their work published in internationally recognised peer-reviewed journals. The Oxford/LSE team has amongst them many editors or associate editors of some of the best general economics or development economics journals. IFG offer a simulated formal peer-review mechanism for any working papers produced by the Southern research teams, of course on a voluntary submission basis. Anonymous reports will be produced and researchers will be encouraged to revise-and-resubmit, but with RPC staff also helping to assess how to handle the comments made. The RPC also plans to offer training on research seminar presentation skills and policy-oriented presentation skills.

Some RPC are actively promoting **jointly authored papers and research reports**. For example:

- **RECOUP**: One of the RPC's outputs will be jointly authored papers by north-south partners published in peer-reviewed publications.

- **IFG**: All projects involving Southern partner institutions always involve mixed teams with at least one researcher from Oxford or LSE linked with researcher from a Southern institution. While this is not a necessary requirement, most teams have explicitly requested this, identifying joint research analysis and joint authorship of research outputs a valuable source of capacity building. The Northern researcher is a key contact, and will travel regularly to the partner institution, not least during crucial periods in the research, such as during questionnaire and sample design, pilots, data collection training, data analysis and writing of research outputs.

- **SRH & HIV**: Two of the RPC's aims are that collaborators from Southern institutions will be named as leading authors on peer-reviewed publications; and that all partners will participate in international, regional and national conferences.

Facilitating **Southern research leadership** is an important next step in this process. Some RPC are working to make this transition:

- **SRH & HIV**: One of the RPC's aims is that collaborators from Southern institutions will be named as Principal Investigators on funded research programmes.

- **CPRC**: The CPRC has successfully formed a West African regional network. This has taken time, and is still in the initial stages. However, once country level work takes off, it is expected that a regional approach will yield dividends in terms of stronger southern leadership, south-south collaboration, and opportunities for comparative work. The lesson is that we should have held out for this in phase 1 (where we gave in too easily to countries' desires to work independently).

- **Citizenship DRC**: By 2005/06, nearly all research programme convenors were Southern researchers based outside of IDS. This has been an important transition within the DRC as new convenors adjust to their roles and as the coordination team learns to work well with them. It is also crucial because it helps to build the long-term sustainability of the Citizenship DRC research agenda in Southern partner organisations.

Partnership and funding

A related issue to strengthening Southern research leadership is how to **distribute financial funds** within the RPC. This is a complex issue, and a few reflections from three RPC are given below:

- **Migration DRC**: The Migration DRC has committed a sum of £20,000 per annum to each partner. However, where additional proposals have been put forward by partners for additional funds, these have been assessed using agreed criteria, and funded when they meet those criteria and budgets allow. The process for selection of proposals for funding for the second phase (2006-08) was elaborated on in the last annual report. A similar process of assessment by a Migration DRC committee together with an independent reviewer was followed for the communications strategy proposals. As a consequence, there is a wide divergence in funds attracted by different partners as some have bid for and received larger shares for both research and communications activities.

- **RaD**: At present programme funds are allocated roughly equally between the four main country partners, but if the programme is to respond to initiatives proposed by the more capable and active country teams, this will have implications for the distribution of resources between country teams (in addition to differences in the cost of doing research in different countries).

- **IFG**: Earmarking of funding is not necessarily the best way to collaborate, and our own experience over many years has highlighted the serious incentive and quality control problems this may entail. Furthermore, the equality of the allocated envelopes to each of the Southern partners has raised eyebrows during reviews. We have nevertheless maintained this earmarking of a fixed envelope after the inception phase, as it provides a transparency and fairness across partners in the form of a level playing field. In order to release this funding, we have systematically required detailed research plans, with actual costing. Partner institutions have been encouraged to develop plans, in line with the overall research plans of the RPC, which would exhaust the budget. However, we have made clear that excellent proposals are expected, that have both high academic potential as well as the potential for policy change.

South-South exchange and collaboration

A challenge in relation to traditional research working practices is that there has often been more North-South communication than South-South communication. Some of the RPC are trying to break with this pattern. For example:

- **Migration DRC**: The internship/fellowships programme has been a tremendous success, with partner institutions offering placements of a few months. However, most of the applicants are still from the North and this year we are making a concerted effort in all our partners to promote south-south exchanges. A sum of £5,000 has been earmarked to pay towards the travel and subsistence of the interns moving between southern countries, and we hope to attract at least two interns moving between partners in the coming year.
- **Effective Health Care**: In terms of RPC partner organisation, there have been specific efforts to link China and the Philippines (TB reviews, fellowships, and meetings); Nigeria and South Africa (joint visits with a focus on developing Nigeria as a Cochrane Centre). Nigeria, India, and South Africa work closely together within the Cochrane Collaboration as Cochrane Centres (South Africa established; India and Nigeria developing capacity in order to apply, the RPC is supporting their registration).

Journalists

A few RPC are strengthening the capacity of infomediaries. For example:

- **Realising Rights**: In some contexts, media and advocacy of SRHR can be silenced by conservatism: e.g. in Bangladesh, words such as sex or condoms cannot be used on the radio and broad terms such as reproductive health must be used. There, journalists have set up a new forum called 'theatre and environment' to address issues of censorship and rights and there is a drive to overcome these barriers to communication. The programme intends to capitalise on the media interest and engagement of supportive journalists to develop communications activities with journalists. The RPC will develop a proposal for capacity development workshops with journalists which will look at how to engage audiences with difficult and controversial issues. BRAC has already conducted a training workshop designed to give journalists a better understanding of SRH and rights.

Capacity to take up research among policymakers

A few RPC are also aiming to strengthen the capacity of policymakers to be able to seek out and use research findings.

- **CREHS**: In South Africa, at the request of the DoH, RPC partner institution CHP is supporting the development of a DoH policy analysis unit and building the capacity of people and the system. This should help improve the receptivity of the DoH to research findings.
- **Effective Health Care**: Ironically, it is parts of the World Health Organization that has some of the most limited understanding of evidence-informed health. Their decision making process is generally around consensus. However, the environment here seems set to change, and we hope to have opportunities for increased impact during this time.

Institutional: After the RPC

Hopefully many of the connections that are being established between in-country research institutes and stakeholders in that country will be sustained beyond the life of the RPC. Examples of arrangements that will last beyond the life of the RPC include:

- **EfA**: We hope that the relationships built or strengthened during the course of this programme between researchers and research users will continue after the programme is finished, and that researchers will continue to act as advisors to Ministries of Health and international organisations.
- **WEMC**: To ensure that the communication of key messages and influencing policy uptake continue beyond the WEMC project life cycle, the research process will be linked to existing field programmes of the Partners/Associates, thus enabling WEMC findings to be fed directly into the latter.

- **MHAPP**: The RPC aims to establish a Mental Health Policy and Services Research Unit in the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health at the University of Cape Town that will continue this field of policy-oriented research.

Gaps and challenges

- Overall there is perhaps surprisingly little discussion in the RPC documents concerning the challenges involved in promoting and strengthening **Southern research leadership**. This indicates that most RPC at this stage are focusing on strengthening individual research and communication capacity within their partner teams, rather than attempting to shift research leadership responsibilities. This may be a necessary stage. It may also be a sign, however, that the challenges of shifting and promoting Southern leadership seem beyond the scope or ability of the RPC.
- The same is true of **South-South exchange and collaboration**.
- The issues of **partnership and funding** remain complex, and RPC seem to be reflecting on them and dealing with them to the best of their ability.
- Overall there is relatively little discussion of whether and how capacity, including institutional connections and arrangements, will be sustained **after the life of the RPC**.

3.4 Findings from the Stories of Change

Stories of Change were collected from RPC staff to explore how communication activities may have contributed to examples where the RPC claim to have achieved some policy impact. Some Stories of Change were also collected to understand examples of innovative approaches to communication within the RPC itself. As such, the latter were framed as stories of 'behaviour change', even in cases where these methods were in practice since the RPC was established. These stories have not only helped to corroborate many of the findings from the desk study, but also to develop a clearer picture of what works well when trying to implement change within RPC as well as outlining challenges that still remain. They included:

- Stories of internal behaviour change:
  o CPRC: Working as a network
  o Crisis States: Face-to-face policy engagement
  o EdQual: Facilitating Southern-led research
  o Pathways: Engaging the public
  o RiPPLE: Making research more demand-driven
  o Future State: Linking good taxation to good governance

- Stories of national policy impact:
  o COMDIS: Realigning Chinese Tuberculosis policy and practice
  o CREATE: Thinking beyond enrolment in Ghana's Ministry of Education
  o EfA: Getting HIV status in the Malawian 'health passport'

- Stories of regional/ local policy impact:
  o ABBA: Standardising support for vulnerable children in Amangwe village, South Africa
  o Young Lives: Integrating child-focused policy across departments in Andhra Pradesh, India

Comparison with the desk review

What do these stories tell us about the desk review? The majority of the findings in the desk review were further supported by the Stories of Change. There was a particular emphasis on making research more demand-driven through involving stakeholders in the research process and by emphasising Southern-led research.

RiPPLE, for example, has invested in establishing Learning and Practice Alliances (LPAs) at various governmental levels across Ethiopia. They suggest this collaboration has been useful in narrowing and refining the scope of research within a limited budget. In the case of all of the **RPC working on health issues**, sustained engagement with policy-makers was cited as essential to the success of policy interventions. Partners from **EfA** working in Malawi, for example, built on an annual report that the Malawian Ministry of Health commissioned them to undertake. This holds true at the local level too: **ABBA**, working in Amangwe village, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, have been careful to make sure the community helps define the research questions that they pursue.

The **CPRC** has taken the network approach to emphasising Southern-led research in West Africa, which has resulted in much more autonomy for research partners than in some of the other regions in which they operate. **EdQual** has also worked closely with its Southern research partners to help them develop skills throughout the research cycle, not only in terms of research methods, but also with writing proposals and helping communicate research.

Although the initial desk review found that not many of the RPC employed communication techniques beyond traditional publications and conferences, several of the stories highlighted the innovative communication approaches that were being undertaken. **Crisis States**, for example, has chosen to emphasise direct contact through face-to-face meetings with stakeholders across the globe. **Pathways** has also used video to great effect, hosted photography competitions and is planning a song writing competition to help alter the often negative discourse about women that is found in many songs. Although not mentioned in the Story of Change, **RiPPLE** also produced a successful video for World Water Day that was broadcast in a main square in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and used by other international organisations. While **Pathways** and **RiPPLE** used these diverse approaches to reach out to a broader audience, they also helped influence policy dialogue.

In terms of key lessons that can be synthesised from these stories, they generally fit within the RAPID framework, which considers the interplay among 'context', 'evidence' and 'links' in influencing policy.

The important role that context plays was highlighted in several of the stories. **COMDIS**, which had been working closely with the Chinese government on revised TB guidelines, found their case suddenly supported in 2006 when the WHO issued new guidelines in line with those COMDIS was promoting. Having the additional backing of an organisation trusted by the Chinese government certainly helped COMDIS enter into the Chinese policy arena. **CREATE's** successes in Ghana were also supported by a receptive Ministry of Education, the director of which was an important proponent of and participant in the consortium.

CREATE was not the only instance where a few 'champions' helped drive the change process, and their role cannot be underestimated. The story of change outlined by **Future State** is mainly driven by a few champions who helped generate interest in the issue of good taxation in an environment that was not always receptive. Bringing in an enthusiastic Communications Officer to **Pathways** was also central to moving their communication activities beyond standard academic outputs.

With regard to evidence, making sure research was demand-driven was consistently stressed. **Future State** also demonstrates the importance of gathering a significant evidence base as a means of gaining traction in both the academic and policy circles, although it wasn't until this knowledge was translated into a more condensed format that it became more popular in the policy arena.

Links have also been central to many of the stories. Long-term engagement with other team members helped sustain innovative working practices. Working closely with policy makers throughout the research process not only helped focus research, as was the case with **RiPPLE**, but also helped disseminate research findings, as **Young Lives** discovered in Andhra Pradesh.

Remaining challenges

Many of the challenges noted in these stories of change are not unique to RPC. Many cite cooperative action, as in building a network, as resource-intensive. Maintaining a network requires both time and money on all accounts. This may be overcome by enthusiastic 'champions', but it is certainly a barrier to innovative practices.

Engagement with stakeholders also requires significant time investment, and carries certain risks. As government posts tend to change often, focusing too narrowly on a certain person can limit uptake if/when s/he moves. **Young Lives** experienced this first-hand when engaging with the Minister for Women and Children, who changed roles shortly after the plan they had been collaborating on was announced. There is also concern within **CREATE** that the progress they have made under the current Director of Education, who has been such an important driver of this process, will be hampered if he were to change roles – they are actively trying to foster other relationships and build capacity of others in the ministry to use research in order to mitigate against this scenario.

Monitoring impact and change remains tricky for many of the RPC, especially those who have experimented with alternative communication practices.

The full Stories of Change can be found in **Annex 5**:

Chapter 4: DFID's impact on RPC communication

Having now presented some of the achievements of the focus on communication in the RPC in chapter 3, we will turn to the question: How much of this is due to the 10% minimum spend on communication activities? In order to address this question, the present chapter presents two sets of data. The first is a comparison between the RPC and 15 other DFID-funded research programmes. The aim of this is to explore what difference, if any, the stipulated 10% spend on communication in the RPC makes compared to DFID-funded research programmes that do not have this rule. The second is the results of focus-group discussions with staff from four research organisations that currently host RPC but who have also received funds from other donors. The aim of this was to explore how much, if any, change in communication activity might have been due to DFID's policy.

4.1 Other DFID-funded research programmes

Fifteen programmes were used for the purposes of comparison. None of them had or have a stipulated 10% spend on communication (though they all carry out communication activities, to varying degrees). The programmes were:

- **RNRRS**: Ten were programmes carried out as part of DFID's Renewable Natural Resource Research Strategy (RNRRS), funded from around 1995-2006 including Aquaculture and Fish Genetics Research Programme (AFGRP); Fisheries Management Science Programme (FMSP); Post Harvest Fisheries Research Programme (PHFRP); Animal Health Programme (AHP); Livestock Production Programme (LPP); Crop Post Harvest Programme (CPHP); Crop Protection Programme (CPP); Plant Sciences Research Programme (PSP); Forestry Research Programme (FRP); Natural Resource Systems Programme (NRSP).

- **EngKaR**: The Engineering Knowledge and Research Programme (EngKaR) ran from the 1980s until 2003 under DFID's Infrastructure and Urban Development Department (IUDD), and then an additional year under DFID's Central Research Department (CRD). The programme received just over £100m in DFID funds for the period 1990-2003. It administered around 600 projects, distributed across six sectors: energy, geosciences, transport, urbanisation, water, and health and disability.

- **DART and ARROW**: The Development of Anti-Retroviral Therapy in Africa (DART) ran from 2002-2007 and received £2.5m from DFID. It was a six-year clinical trial of anti-HIV therapy in 3300 patients with advanced HIV disease or AIDS in Uganda and Zimbabwe. A second programme, Anti-Retroviral Therapy in Africa for Watoto (ARROW) is scheduled to run from 2006-2011, again with £2.5m in DFID funds. ARROW is a clinical trial with 1200 children in Uganda and Zimbabwe. DART and ARROW have also received funding from the UK Medical Research Council (MRC), and Rockefeller Foundation and Anti-retroviral drugs have been provided by GlaxoSmithKline, Gilead and Boehringer-Ingelheim for DART, and by GlaxoSmithKline for ARROW.

- **MMV**: The Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) received £10m from DFID for 2005-2010. This constitutes around 10% of the venture's total funds. DFID is the second-largest funder after the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The venture runs drug trials and aims to form product development public-private partnerships (PDPs) in order to register and market drugs that can treat malaria.

- **RALF**: Research in Alternative Livelihoods Funds (RALF) is a programme run exclusively in Afghanistan in order to develop and promote innovative alternative livelihood options for rural Afghans currently economically dependent on opium poppy.

RALF is managed by the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), one of the CGIAR institutes. RALF received £3m from DFID for 2004-2007[7].

N.B. The data gathered from the above 15 programmes for comparison with the RPC data was gathered from a relatively limited review of the programmes' latest annual reports (or other documents if the annual reports were not available) and websites, and necessarily presents a general overview rather than detailed assessment of each programme. It should be noted that data may be somewhat distorted since only some of them (mainly the RNRRS programmes) were asked specifically to provide information about, e.g. uptake promotion, in their reports and since no interviews have been carried out. Data for the RPC is drawn from the desk review presented in chapters 2 and 3 of this report. A full list of the documents and websites reviewed can be found in **Annex 4**.

The comparison presented here focuses on three areas: Communication outputs, Working practices, and Uptake. The results for each area are presented in a table. For the RPC and RNRRS programmes a number has been given in each relevant row of the table. This number refers to the number of programmes that mentioned the relevant criteria in their annual reports or elsewhere. The numbers have also been colour-coded to indicate whether the result is relatively *low* **(light grey)**, *medium* **(dark grey)**, or *high* **(black)**. The same colour-coding has been used for the remaining five programmes, based on the frequency of the relevant criteria in their reports.

Communication outputs

Table 1. Communication outputs (black = high, dark grey = medium, light grey = low)

	RPC (n=29)	RNRRS (n=10)	EngKaR	DART + ARROW	MMV	RALF
Academic conferences and meetings	29	10				
Academic articles and papers	29	10				
Practical toolkits, guidelines, training	6	8				
Policy briefing papers	29	3				
Newsletter	c.20	5				
Mentioned in media	29	4				
Popular media (radio, TV, film, drama, cartoons, etc)	10	5				
Translate some outputs into other languages	11	4				
Summaries through id21 or Eldis	11	1				
Press releases	c.20					
Targeted press conferences / media packs	4					
Aiming to build formal networks	4	1				

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7 N.B. While included here as an example of DFID funded research, it is important to note that RALF was developed and funded by the DFID Afghanistan country programme.

Points to note:

- The **RPC** overall produce more of the communication outputs listed here than any of the other programmes.

- The **RNRRS** programmes also score highly. Many of the RNRRS programmes refer to a shift in strategy occurring around 2000-2001 towards embedding communication in their programmes. The key motivating forces included the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), DFID's new poverty focus, and encouragement to promote uptake from DFID, which meant that ways of reaching and having an impact on poor people needed to be included as part of the research. Most of the RNRRS programmes included this aspect by engaging in different types of participatory research, action research or applied research. As can be seen from Table 1, this led to a high output of practical toolkits, guidelines and training courses, for e.g. farmers.

- During the last year of the RNRRS programmes there was a special focus on **uptake promotion**. In 2006, a synthesis study across six of the RNRRS research programmes and their projects stated that all had mandatory requirements to include communication in their projects, and all provided support for this, such as guidelines and training (Norrish, 2006b). While none of the six programmes in the study had a formal communication strategy, all had plans or strategies for uptake promotion in which communication activities were central. All programmes had chosen to provide budgets for communication activities and products.

- A few examples of the shift towards communication in the RNRRS programmes include:
  - **AFGRP:** Project R5502 (Development and exploitation of transgenic Tilapia) from 1993-98 produced 36 academic papers and articles, and left the dissemination of findings to the end of the project, when it was hoped that NGOs and government agencies would disseminate the results. In contrast, the later project R7590 (Genetic status and improvement strategies for exotic carps for low input aquaculture in Asia), from 2000-2004, aimed to influence policy in order to have a sustainable impact. The project supported the implementation of improved broodstock management practices, with the aim of sustainable and improved seed quality at state or national level, and collaborated e.g. with the Karnataka State Department of Fisheries in India to achieve this.
  - **PHFRP:** Since 2000-01 the work of the programme has moved away from the generation of 'technical fix' approaches and towards the generation of knowledge designed to inform the development of appropriate policies and intervention strategies. With one exception, projects commissioned and implemented from 2000-01 to 2003-04 were focused on aspects of process, institutions and policies within the post-harvest sector – a strategic shift away from the programme's earlier focus on the technical aspects of loss assessment and control.
  - **CPP:** From 2000/01 there was as shift within the programme towards promotion of technologies by target institutions and beneficiaries. This resulted in a large increase in outputs specifically geared towards these audiences (e.g. manuals, videos, etc.) rather than peer-reviewed journal articles.
  - **AHP:** During the last six years, the AHP and its body of researchers have worked hard at transforming DFID-funded animal health research into something more targeted, closer to end-users and ready for uptake by them and, above all, more poverty focused.

There are two notable differences between the RPC and the RNRRS programmes:

- First, the RNRRS programmes produced more practical toolkits, guidelines and training courses. This reflects their stronger focus on **reaching poor communities directly**, and their general lack of systematic policy engagement strategies. The RPC, on the other hand, produce more policy briefing papers. This reflects their stronger focus on

> **sustained policy engagement**, and reducing poverty through having an impact on international, national and local policy.

- Second, while the RNRRS programmes were mentioned in the media from time to time, none of them specifically mention having **a strategy for engaging with the media** or using the media more systematically. Most of the RPC, on the other hand, issue press releases and include the media in their communication strategies.

The remaining five programmes in Table 1 (EngKaR, DART and ARROW, MMV, RALF) have lower levels of embedded communication in their programmes.

- **EngKaR:** As with the RNRRS programmes, communication became more embedded in EngKaR during the last phase of the programme, partially due to DFID encouragement. A review of EngKaR notes that overall this generic guidance helped to shift the focus of the programme away from primarily 'engineering' solutions developed at arms length from potential users, to a far more participatory approach, using action research and an innovation-centred perspective (Arnold et al., 2005). The review also notes, however, that while DFID vigorously addressed past dissemination deficiencies through communications efforts, less attention was devoted to connecting projects to larger development strategies or managing the process of realising and assessing impacts (Arnold et al., 2005). Again this is reflected in the programme's high output of practical toolkits and guidelines but low output of policy briefing papers.

- **DART and ARROW:** These programmes focus on a more traditional model of research programme communication, which consists in presenting academic papers at conferences and publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals.

- **MMV:** This programme invests much in producing well-designed reports and being available to the media. They employ a media contact person. Overall the programme is less embedded in local policy contexts, as indicated by their limited focus on policy briefing papers. This reflects the programme's stronger focus on establishing sustained engagement with pharmaceutical companies in the private sector.

- **RALF:** The focus of this programme is on direct engagement with poor rural communities and individual farmers. The communication output – which is overall relatively low – reflects this focus on group and one-on-one communication, as well as the programme's unstable political context.

Communication processes and structures

Table 2. Communication processes and structures
(black = high, dark grey = medium, light grey = low)

	RPC (n=29)	RNRRS (n=10)	EngKaR	DART + ARROW	MMV	RALF
Communication processes and structures						
External advisory group (international)	29	10				
In-country advisory group	c.15	1				
Person responsible for communications	29	1				
Communications plan	29	1				
M&E processes						
Logframe-based	29	10				
M&E tools that examine impact pathways	8	1				

Points to note:

- The **RPC** score highly on **management of programme communications**, both within the programme (with a person responsible for communications and a communications plan) and in the way the programme's management is partially embedded in international and in-country networks (with an external programme advisory group as well as, in many cases, an in-country programme advisory group). This reflects their embeddedness in the country contexts in which they are working.

- The RNRRS programme that comes close to being as embedded in the in-country policy context as the RPC is **CPHP**, which from 2002 onwards mainstreamed an innovation systems approach that emphasised coalitions and the institutional context of research and development:
  - **CPHP** is unique among DFID's natural resources research programmes in having four regional offices (Kampala, Harare, Accra, Hyderabad). The role of these offices evolved over time. In the early days they simply provided logistical and financial support to projects. In March 2002, for the first time, they acquired responsibility for certain management functions within the programme, including supporting the formation of in-country partnerships around each research theme. Most of the latest round of projects are run by national partners, some of whom have never run a project before.

- **DART and ARROW** are both implemented in a partnership between the UK Medical Research Council (MRC), the University of Zimbabwe, and three research and hospital sites in Uganda (MRC-UVRI, JCRC, and Mulago Hospital). While this gives a potentially good base for in-country engagement, it is unclear to what extent this base is being exploited by the programmes, since programme activity remains largely **confined to implementing clinical trials**, and does not seem to have any communication strategy.

- **MMV** is different from DART and ARROW in that the venture combines clinical trials with a clear **access strategy**, in order to ensure that any findings and marketable drugs will become accessible to those who need them. This will be discussed further below.

- **RALF:** RALF scores highly on having **an in-country advisory group** in Afghanistan which includes national policymakers.

On **M&E**:

- Most DFID-funded research programmes use logframes to monitor progress. The M&E systems for clinical trials (DART, ARROW and MMV) are tied to reporting of clinical results. Few of the programmes surveyed use M&E tools to examine their impact pathways.

Working practices

Table 3. Working practices (black = high, dark grey = medium, light grey = low)

	RPC (n=29)	RNRRS (n=10)	EngKaR	DART + ARROW	MMV	RALF
Seeking multiplier funding	c.25	2				
Seeking extra funding/ training for communication	4					
Targeted engagement with policymakers	29	6				
Inception-phase stakeholder meetings	29	5				
Attempts to make research demand-driven	6	6				
Collaboration with other DFID-funded programmes	15	8				
Incorporating multi-disciplinary research	3	4				
Incorporating policy context analysis	8	1				
Working towards open access scholarship	2					

Points to note:

- The **RPC's** ability to be **embedded in both international and in-country contexts** is reflected in their advantage over the other programmes when it comes to inception-phase stakeholder meetings and targeted engagement with policymakers. This is a particular strength of the RPC model, and is strengthened by their programme-length partnerships with in-country research institutions.

- The **RNRRS** programmes overall score relatively highly on incorporating multi-disciplinary research and attempts to make research more demand-driven. Their **incorporation of multi-disciplinary research** reflects the shift towards a stronger poverty focus within DFID, and most of the RNRRS programmes responded by employing social scientists in addition to natural scientists. Likewise, their attempts to make **research more demand-driven** largely reflect their shift towards more participatory forms of research that engaged directly with poor communities. Here it must be noted that their attempts at being demand-driven were mostly implemented at project level, with specific communities. The potential drawback of this approach was highlighted by LPP.
  - **LPP:** The vast majority of LPP project outputs have focused on single interventions which on their own do not address the myriad of challenges faced by resource poor livestock keepers. Therefore, during the final phase LPP has been grouping various tools together in toolboxes that provide a slightly more comprehensive approach.

- The **RNRRS** programmes' high degree of **collaboration with other DFID-funded programmes** is due to these programmes' ability to collaborate with each other. This

should perhaps be set against the RNRRS programmes' overall poorer ability to interact with in-country DFID offices.

The remaining five programmes have adopted fewer new working practices related to communications.

- **EngKaR:** It must be noted that EngKaR's low profile in Table 3 may be due to under-reporting of some of their working practices. At the same time this low profile may also reflect their lack of more comprehensive embeddedness in-country. As one review of EngKaR showed, the EngKaR portfolio seemed **thematically and geographically fragmented,** making it hard for the projects to be mutually reinforcing and for them to be communicated effectively in any given country or policy context (Arnold et al., 2005). This impression is reinforced by the fact that when the review team asked EngKaR project managers about reasons for failure to fully realise project goals, the most commonly cited reason was lower than expected input from partners or users in the South. This may point to a **lack of sustained engagement with in-country partners or users**. The review suggested that the nature of EngKaR's engagement with Southern stakeholders varied considerably – some projects aiming simply to 'inform', others to 'liaise with', but only a minority to really 'involve' key Southern stakeholders in all aspects of the work (Arnold et al., 2005).

- In parallel with a clear **access strategy**, **MMV** seeks to develop partnerships with pharmaceuticals for each of their potential drugs (**product development public private partnerships,** PDPs). MMV's priorities regarding access and delivery are to work with its partners to improve understanding of the antimalarials market and to prepare endemic countries to facilitate rapid uptake of the new drugs. The access strategy includes supporting product adoption (e.g. understanding requirements to achieve wider reach to distribution outlets), expanding product reach (e.g. understanding market dynamics for antimalarials), and shaping product development (e.g. improving packaging and user instructions). MMV therefore scores higher than DART and ARROW on policy context analysis and on targeted engagement with policymakers (primarily in order to register new drugs).

- In addition to having an in-country advisory group, **RALF** managers also engage in other ways with the national policymakers and are aware of the importance of **nurturing sustained relationships** with them. Beyond this RALF has not incorporated many new working practices at programme level. Most of its activity is tied to individual community-based projects.

A final note of interest, not included in the table above, is the fact that of all the 44 research programmes surveyed, only one mentioned the potential added **environmental cost of implementing more comprehensive communications.** This programme, AHP (one of the RNRRS programmes), made an attempt at the end of the programme's life to offset some of this added environmental cost:

- **AHP:** Increasingly, organisations, individuals, events, programmes and projects – including DFID-funded research programmes – are taking steps to minimise their carbon footprints. It is estimated that a return flight from UK to East Africa produces around 1.5 tonnes of carbon, as CO_2, per passenger. This is approximately equivalent to the amount of carbon locked up in three medium-sized trees. Assuming a survival rate of 1 in 4 trees, this is equivalent to planting 12 trees. AHP has sponsored a local tree-planting NGO in Kenya that works in close collaboration with local schools and labourers in order to offset at least the carbon footprint of the programme's flights.

Getting research taken up

Table 4. Getting research taken up (black = high, dark grey = medium, light grey = low)

	RPC (n=29)	RNRRS (n=10)	EngKaR	DART + ARROW	MMV	RALF
By bi/multilaterals	8	3				
By DFID/UK	6	2				
By national policymakers	11	7				
By state/district level	3	5				
By civil society	3	3				
By private sector		1				

Points to note:

- Examples of **RPC** research being taken up has been given in chapters 3 and 4.
- Uptake promotion was especially emphasised during the last year of the **RNRRS** programmes. Prior to this, RNRRS research uptake was primarily tied to individual projects. An example from uptake that influenced national policy is given by AHP.
  o **AHP:** A project breakthrough came when the project demonstrated the importance of cattle as the main reservoir of acute human sleeping sickness in eastern Africa, and ensured that this research influenced policy – in Uganda, cattle must now be treated before being moved from endemic to non-endemic areas.
- While uptake from **RPC** and **RNRRS** programmes is overall similar, it should be noted that this data reflects the situation at the end of the RNRRS programmes' life, but only a couple of years into the life of the RPC (with the exception of those RPC who were previously DRCs). From this perspective, the RPC seem to have gained **a head start** as compared to the RNRRS programmes. It may also be important to bear in mind that the uptake of RPC research occurs in the context of the programmes being relatively more **embedded in-country**, as discussed above, while the uptake of RNRRS research occurred in the context of a lower level of embeddedness in-country and a much lower level of sustained policy engagement. This may potentially mean that the uptake of RPC research is more **sustainable**.
- While uptake may sometimes be difficult to judge from programme reports, it seems that overall the remaining five programmes have overall had lower uptake of their research findings.

Capacity strengthening

Table 5. Capacity strengthening (black = high, dark grey = medium, light grey = low)

	RPC (n=29)	RNRRS (n=10)	EngKaR	DART + ARROW	MMV	RALF
Individual capacity of Southern researchers	29	6				
Policymakers' capacity to use research	2	1				
South-South collaboration	2					
Southern research leadership	3	4				

Points to note:

- The **RPC** seem to have been the only programmes here which have **capacity strengthening** emphasised as part of their terms of reference. They have all duly followed up and report on capacity strengthening activities in their reports.

- The **RNRRS** programmes, on the other hand, were not originally supposed to spend programme funds on capacity strengthening, and individual programmes responded to this in different ways – some avoiding capacity strengthening and other incorporating it anyway (LTS et al., 2005). By the end of the programmes' life at least six reported that they engaged in activities that explicitly strengthened the capacity of **Southern scientists and technicians**.

- However, the most interesting point regarding the RNRRS programmes is that at least four of them attempted to **transfer management and leadership functions to Southern partners** during their last phase (around 2002-2006), and thus strengthened Southern research leadership. Relatively speaking, more RNRRS programmes sought to do this than RPC, even though this is a far more explicit part of the RPC's terms of reference. Two examples from RNRRs programmes include:
  - **AHP:** Over the past 6 years, AHP has tried to ensure that a large proportion of its funds are both spent and managed overseas, with over a third of its current projects led by institutions based outside the UK and all of its bolt-on activities commissioned from overseas partners.
  - **LPP:** During the reporting year 2004/05, 8 of 24 projects (33%) in the LPP portfolio were led by in-country institutions. This is an increasing trend within the programme. In 1998 this was true for 3 out of 35 projects (8%), and in 2001/02, it was true for 5 out of 33 projects (15%).

For the remaining five programmes, capacity strengthening plays a minor role.

- In **EngKaR** and **RALF** capacity strengthening seems to occur as a favourable by-product of other project activities.

- **DART**, **ARROW** and **MMV** do not report any explicit goal of strengthening Southern capacity.

Conclusion

The data presented above are based on a desk review (see **Annex 4**), and can therefore only serve as a general guide rather than detailed assessment of the programmes in question. Nevertheless, the data do show the contours of **some significant differences between the RPC and the other DFID-funded research programmes surveyed**. Some of the key differences between the RPC and the other research programmes include:

- The RPC do not only engage in dissemination activities on a project-by-project basis, but also approach **communication at the programme level**, e.g. through a communication strategy and a person responsible for programme-wide communications.
- The RPC are overall more **embedded in their policy and country contexts**, through e.g. inception-phase stakeholder consultations, long-term partnerships with in-country research organisations, in-country advisory groups, ongoing engagement with policymakers, and a comprehensive set of communication activities in-country (including media).
- The RPC are overall more turned towards engagement and communication with **policy and policymakers**, rather than direct engagement with poor communities.

The relatively high score of the **RNRRS** programmes also deserves mention. It indicates both that the **DFID focus on poverty** was taken on board by these programme managers, and that DFID's emphasis on **dissemination and uptake** led to improvements in the range and quality of these programmes' outputs over time. In many ways the RPC model could be seen as a further development of the RNRRS model. The **added advantages of the RPC model** lie in its strategic focus on communication from the start, its focus on communication at a programme level, its programme partnerships with Southern institutions, and its engagement with policymakers at programme level rather than on a project-by-project basis.

4.2 Tracking communication changes in organisations hosting RPC

Focus group discussions were held with staff in four organisations that currently host RPC but who have also received funding over the last decade or so from a wide range of other donors. The aim of the discussions was to identify points at which communication activities changed and to explore the reasons for the changes to assess whether it was DFID's emphasis on communication in the RPC or other factors which caused the apparent change in communication activities, and whether DFID's emphasis on communication had any wider effect within the organisations. The four organisations were the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (**LSHTM**), the Institute of Development Studies (**IDS**), the University of Cape Town (**UCT**), and the Overseas Development Institute (**ODI**). LSHTM hosts four of the health-related RPC: CREHS, EfA, SRH & HIV, and TARGETS. IDS hosts four RPC: Citizenship, Future State, Pathways, and Realising Rights. In addition, the University of Sussex (where IDS is located) hosts one RPC, namely CREATE. UCT hosts one RPC, namely MHAPP. And ODI hosts RIPPLE and CPRC. The data for this chapter was gathered through focus group or key informant discussions with staff from the institutions in question. A list of the dates and participants in the focus groups discussions can be found in **Annex 6.**

Although the discussions were carried out with a limited number of staff – most of whom had a close association with their organisation's research communication development – they provided sufficient insights into the influences that have shaped research communication in each organisation.

Communication at LSHTM

Research communication at the LSHTM has developed unevenly with most of the progress observed at programme level and limited systematic development at the organisational level. One of the RPCs (CREHS) has a longer history of programme-level involvement with DFID, with the Health Economics and Financing Programme having held one of the first Knowledge Programme grants (from 1990). Two significant changes may be identified from this longer term perspective: First, a jump in the quantity and quality of the communication outputs from DFID-funded research programmes that took place around 2004; and second, an institutionalisation of research communication illustrated by the appointment of

communications officers by RPCs in 2007, the establishment of an informal communications group among the RPC communications officers, and the LSHTM's communication review that is currently (October 2008) underway.

Before 2004, communication activities within the research programmes were driven by academic interests, with greater priority given to the publication in peer-reviewed journals, though there were also efforts to summarise research in the form of, for example, newsletters distributed through a wide network of policymakers and researchers. Researchers lacked the skills and time to invest significant effort in these additional communication outputs (a problem made more severe by the predominance of short-term, contract-funded research staff). Where possible, researchers would take advantage of communication portals such as id21, whose writers would do the first draft of a summary and provide this to the researcher for comment or clarification.

Informal communication through academic and practitioner networks (many ministers of health and health officials in developing countries have studied at LSHTM) did take place. Most important, perhaps, were the formal and informal channels of communication between research partners in overseas institutions and their policy networks. LSHTM researchers also communicated findings through participation in high profile national and international policy processes, expert groups, etc. For example, HEFP members (Anne Mills) led one of the working groups of the Commission for Macroeconomics and Health, and participated in the widespread communication of Commission's reports. HEFP researchers have also contributed their findings to a wide variety of policy processes in specific disease areas, such as malaria, and maternal and child health. Furthermore, LSHTM partners have developed and implemented a wide range of communication activities targeted well beyond academic audiences.

Even in some of the research programmes implemented by the school at the time, communication was carried out mostly by administrators and through these informal channels – but without a long term and coordinated strategy. Successive rounds of the knowledge programmes brought greater emphasis to demand-driven research and disseminating results.

The introduction of the 10% rule in DFID-funded RPC provided a clear signal of DFID's increased prioritisation of research communication, and thereby increased the commitment and appetite of researchers for these activities. However, the implementation of the policy in the school reflected the organisational context: without a central communications department or resources available for the new funding to support or build on, most of the communication writing was undertaken by researchers, and some of the production work was contracted out (e.g. desktop publishing of newsletters, policy briefs, etc.).

As a consequence, the first responses had a limited impact. Rather than employing communications officers (and since they had no guidance on who to look for or where to recruit them) RPC managers, as in other organisations, asked the researchers to incorporate communication roles, such as writing two-page summaries. Later, they attempted to employ a communications officer to work across the various programmes but this turned out to be difficult.

While DFID had produced guidelines to accompany the 10% rule, without professional communications staff, the school found them difficult to implement. There was also pressure to produce new and more elaborate communication outputs that required skills not found within the school. Some RPCs at LSHTM responded to this by appointing communications officers within the first year of the programme (eg. Evidence for Action, SRH&HIV). Practical engagement with DFID communication advisors during the mid-term review and advice from

communications officers from other RPC (who came together in a workshop hosted by DFID) helped.

Following the mid-term reviews, the RPCs invited IDS communications staff to share practical guidance on what type of background and skills would be most valuable in communications staff, and IDS also provided examples of job descriptions and suggestions of where to advertise. Two RPCs (CREHS and Towards 4+5) joined together with a third non-RPC research programme (GHIN) to pool funds for a full-time communication post. TARGETS appointed its communications officer in 2008. This learning process included continuous engagement with IDS and ODI's RAPID Group on the theory and practice of research communication.

The effect of hiring communications officers has been significant. Communications officers have enabled training for LSHTM researchers and their partners, developed clearer strategies, improved the relationships with the programmes' partners, and encouraged buy-in of research communication activities. Also, without a formal structure to fall into, the communications officers from the various RPC have set up an informal communication group. They currently meet regularly and exchange knowledge and have created the foundation of a communications team.

At the organisational level, the school has set up a high level Communication Review. One of the RPC's communications officers is participating on the review panel and the review is expected to affect all aspects of communication within LSHTM.

This particular LSHTM story suggests that DFID's policy was extremely influential in the development of improved research communication in the individual programmes and has contributed to a process of organisational change across the whole school.

Participation Team and Citizenship DRC experience of communications at IDS

As a research centre, IDS would be expected to focus its attention on traditional academic communication activities. However, it is at the forefront of research and practice on research communication. The story of communication at IDS is closely linked to the story of one of its research groups: the Participation, Power and Social Change Team (subsequently referred to as the 'Participation team').

Today, IDS has two interlinked – yet parallel – communication purposes: One that focuses on communicating IDS's research and another more closely allied with the policy research and RPC that IDS hosts. While the former has a clear mandate to position IDS's profile and communicate the centre's knowledge, the latter serves several partner organisations across the developing world and aims to communicate their knowledge as much as IDS's.

Focus group members say that the story can be told in a number of eras: The **heroic era** of the 1960s and 1970s when the focus of communication was on the individual research and his (this was a highly male-dominated community) networks; the **experimental era** of the 1980s and 1990s when the Participation team developed and shared a broader concept of communication embedded in the research and learning processes; and the **institutionalising era** when many of these new communication attitudes and processes were incorporated across IDS and its programmes.

In the 1960s and 1970s, IDS researchers tended to spend a lot of time in countries seconded to ministries or universities. This allowed them to develop strong policy and research networks with a wide range of policymakers in the north and the south. These networks were their main communication channel outside traditional academic outputs. At the time, IDS was much more politicised – to the extent it was considered fairly 'left wing'.

Some talks had very provocative titles and attracted a lot of criticism from the UK government and the private sector, who felt that they were advocating against British interests overseas.

In the next decades, both contacts and politics had been largely institutionalised, giving way to shared research and policy networks and a more neutral and independent political position. Changes in funding patterns and increased competition meant that IDS researchers have had to spend less time in the field doing research and/or strengthening their networks. While there are pressures to focus on international-level policies within the Citizenship DRC and the Participation team, both have focused heavily on building on communication processes at the local level.

Over the same period, the Participation team led the work in new forms of research and engagement. Beginning in the mid-1990s, they embedded communication in its work, always spending more than 10%, employing a communication person and focusing on reaching southern audiences. This included participatory communication as part of development, and challenging the standard academic model of research communication. This was partly possible because of a block grant from the Swiss and Swedes, which had a strong emphasis on sharing their knowledge with partners in the south – in great contrast with the northern policymaker focus we see today.

The Participation team developed an approach to its work that interlocked research, teaching, networking or partnerships, convening and communication activities. Therefore the approach to communication, including a strong emphasis on communication as part of the research process, was an extension of the existing approach.

The introduction of the DRCs brought with them a new wave of communication practitioners and core funding for other groups. Supported by the success of the Participation team and the new incentives provided by DFID, research programmes were able to explore new communication approaches for longer term research processes. The DRCs were also possible because of IDS's capacity to convene people from all over the world and bring people to the UK for short courses in the 1980s and 1990s. The contacts that researchers formed then formed the basis of long term networks and two-way communication processes.

2004 can be considered an inflection point for communication at IDS. A Central Communications team was established when Lawrence Haddad joined IDS in 2004; and since it has grown rapidly from 2-3 to 7-8 staff. Their focus is now more on institutional communications, often with high level global (but rather indistinct) policy objectives. A clear sign of attitudinal change within IDS also came in 2004 with a communication- focused internal seminar; IDS seminars up to that time had focused on high profile research issues.

Over this period there was a shift in the attitude towards communications officers. They were included in an annual research retreat for the first time, and planning processes incorporated research communication and communications staff. A strategic review carried out after Lawrence Haddad joined from IFPRI (where he had been exposed to a stronger communication and media culture) identified the need for stronger, more corporate communication, which led to the establishment of a high profile, more professional central communication unit in the director's office.

Traditionally, research evolves from an initial concept and is based on existing knowledge. In this case, it is often possible to write very clear working papers describing what one is attempting to do. Then there might be a period of less certainty while the research is exposed to issues that are much less clear. This can take a few or several years. Then there might come a period at the end when things become clear again. Too much emphasis on policy- focused communication during the research phase can be counter-productive. On the

other hand, by focusing on partnerships and networks, communication carried out by research programmes can create spaces for researchers and communicators to engage and for the communication processes to be embedded in the research process. But this is not equally possible at the organisational level. Occasionally this led to debates within the Participation team and within IDS about which audiences to prioritise, when to focus more on international policies, and when to focus more at the local and national levels.

DFID's success at raising the profile of communication has had a lot to do with the personalities of the people involved (Abigail Mulhall and Dylan Winder, in particular), who are generally open to new ideas, and who asked how to improve the message about the importance of communication in DFID.

DFID's contribution to IDS's communication policy is difficult to define. Throughout this period, IDS has engaged with DFID (and ODA, before) in a way that has helped shape both organisations' policies on research communication. DFID has been very successful in raising the profile of research communication within the organisation and among other donors. But rather than the 10% policy, it was the relationship and dialogue with DFID and key individuals such as Abigail Mulhall and Dylan Winder that made a difference, as they developed the supporting documents on communication and the annual workshops that gave a forum for RPC communications officers to get together. The policy seems to have provided incentives to the development community to encourage development researchers and practitioners to develop communication skills. In recent years, the quality of communications officer applicants has increased, and the profession is seen as a viable professional career.

In terms of how DFID's funding of communication affected the Citizenship DRC and the Participation team, the emphasis and approach to communication flowed from existing approaches that pre-dated DFID's funding policies. However, external pressure from DFID helped to raise the profile and acceptance of communication in IDS as a whole. Debates at IDS over how to prioritise audiences and the best ways to reach them have emerged, but were resolved in a framework that emphasises the importance of research communication.

Communications at UCT

The South African context has been instrumental in shaping the University of Cape Town's approach to research communication. The story of communication at UCT is closely linked to the political context of the country, and the role that external actors, such as donors, have played has been less fundamental. It has, however, helped drive the professionalisation of communication activities.

Universities in South Africa have a long tradition of engagement with policy processes, in many cases out of a sense of social responsibility or 'obligation'. With the transition into democracy after apartheid, the new government (and other policy actors) began to demand research-based evidence on a growing number of policy areas. They looked to academic institutions for this and provided grants and awards to South African scholars in the 1990s and early 2000s. As the policies proposed became more generally accepted, and the focus turned towards implementation, the demand receded.

This is institutionalised across UCT. For example, the promotion of academics in the South African academic system includes a 'social responsiveness' function.

Therefore, the research process has been seamlessly linked to the policy process. The relationship between academics and policymakers is real and close. This helps both negotiate a better match between demand and supply of research. In developing research

proposals, UCT researchers have taken demand into account using a variety of methods. One of the most successful ones has been introduced by DFID Pretoria: Reference Groups. These are an improvement from the learning alliance model (which is fairly common among many of the UCT projects) but particularly relevant for highly technical research themes or when the research is sponsored directly by the government. With reference groups, the research question is formulated endogenously – and so is policy impact.

Because of reference groups, UCT estimates that almost half the research ends up as cabinet memoranda and policy positions. Their focus, therefore, is on policy actors and their relationship with the media is less strategic. In fact, their biggest challenge is to 'know what to release when'. The media is more interested in informing its audiences about the policies than the research findings – but since the research is part of the policy process, this means that UCT researchers do not need to worry about this.

Besides this embedded communications approach and a media officer for the university, UCT does not carry out more communication activities than the ones promoted (and adopted) by the RPC. Typically, research findings are communicated through peer-reviewed journals and events are organised by researchers themselves.

The RPC introduced slightly different variations on this model: an international advisory committee, for example, has been useful – but not necessarily to communicate research, as they are not the ultimate research users. Rather they tend to be respected academics or experts as well as practitioners at the international level. The 10% policy has also improved the communication products used and has allowed UCT to hire 'professional' communications staff for specific programmes. These resources are 'ring-fenced' and so they can protect them for activities that other funders would not consider appropriate.

DFID could use its leverage to influence other donors' policies towards research communication.

UCT's approach to research communication seems to be based on and driven by its social responsiveness policy. The university defines social responsiveness as 'the collection and dissemination of knowledge for public benefit, involving engagement with communities and organisations external to the university' (Social Responsiveness website of the UCT). UCT's social responsiveness initiatives include: student volunteering, health and human rights training and evidence-based educational outreach, compulsory community placement for law students, and a number of applied research programmes on issues of direct relevance to policy and practice in South Africa and the sub-region.

The story of research communication at UCT is closely linked to the organisation's commitment to social responsiveness. Communicating research, as well as ensuring its relevance to policy and practice, is seen as a responsibility rather than an additional task imposed by donors. DFID has contributed by making additional resources available and promoting the use of more professional tools.

Communication at ODI

The story of communication in ODI can be characterised by a constant struggle between researchers and communicators. Shifts in the balance of power in this process seem to have been provided, mainly, by two forces: leaders (in particular ODI's directors and senior researchers) and the availability of funds.

Today, the ODI Communications Department is appropriately resourced and staffed. It is made up of professional communicators – many with significant experience in the development and research communication fields. They can count on sufficient

communication tools to produce a large and diverse number of communication products; as well as on ODI's researchers who are increasingly involved in more systematic communication that both support or are supported by the organisation's communications staff.

However, between 1983 and 2003, ODI depended on a limited number of people to carry out communication activities. In 1983, for example, much of the communication work was undertaken by three full-time communication posts, with additional part-times support of some project administrators. Together they produced a limited but important number of products that included books, briefing papers, working papers and meetings. Public meetings were usually organised by the same person who was in charge of the Fellowship Scheme and were particularly time consuming, resulting in only seven or eight per year.

Funding for briefing papers and meetings work came from an Information Grant from ODA, which also funded a development library hosted by ODI; but the main drivers for communication activities were the director and individual researchers who used their own policy and research networks to communicate their research.

Although during the 1980s the official line at ODI was that working with the media was important, the work of ODI and, in particular, that of the Agriculture Administration Unit (which received block grant funding and therefore managed its own communication work), was too narrowly focused to have broad media treatment. Given that researchers preferred to develop their networks as a communication strategy, efforts to professionalise the communications team and to develop new communication products were resisted.

The first significant change on communications took place when Tony Killick was replaced by John Howell as director in 1987. In 1985, Tony Killick had led a fundraising drive as part of ODI's 25th anniversary funding appeal, which included a provision for more communication funding. This allowed John Howell to hire a public affairs officer between 1987 and 1990 to deal with media and communication. The number of meetings almost doubled to 12 per year and, more importantly, more interesting and appealing annual reports and better designed policy briefs were produced. This clear improvement in the quality of the communication outputs was, however, met with resistance from many researchers who considered that this contributed to '*dumbing down*' their work. So, when the funds ran out in 1990, the post was not replaced and a more junior person was hired to provide support on more standard publications.

This was, however, the first instance when the support of the Director had been backed up with funds – and it became clear what could be accomplished with monetary backing.

In 1993, ODI partnered with IDS to produce Development Research Insights. This was a new communication output that helped develop a policy relevant format. Unfortunately, when IDS won the management of id21, ODI had to hand over its database of contacts. This was both a blow to ODI and a boon to IDS's communication evolution process. In 1996, ODI's communication strength lost another battle. The information grant provided by ODA was discontinued with a significant effect on the library.

So, when John Howell left in 1997, the funds from the information grant had run out, ODI had lost Development Research Insights and it did not seem that anyone had given serious thought to the consequences. Other than funding communication work out of overheads, the new director, Simon Maxwell, had little options. As a result of the pressure on researchers' overhead (and changes that gave groups more power) resistance to this approach developed.

However, Simon Maxwell had been appointed with an explicit mandate to do more for ODI's research communication. He restored a communication post (1998) funded by overhead and in 1997, charged Peter Gee with public affairs and producing a public affairs strategy document (by the end of 1998), appointed a media and meetings officer (until 1999) and introduced thematic meeting series (rather than individual meetings): which increased the number of meetings to 30 to 40 per year. Contributing to this new communication momentum, an external review of ODI's communication was commissioned in 1999 as a way to award legitimacy to the process and win sceptics over.

By 2001 there was a discernible communications team in ODI. Still understaffed and underfunded, the team worked with group administrators to produce an increasingly larger number of communication products – including the website, which was launched in 1994. With an improved financial position, the communications team had more room for manoeuvre – but always within the limits that no core funding or insufficient overheads.

Two final changes took place in ODI after 2001. First, the Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) programme was set up in 2002. Since then, RAPID has been the source of research on research communication and become a key player in the evolving academic and policy communities on the subject. RAPID, and the experience of the communications team, contributed to winning the Partnership Programme Agreement (PPA) in 2003. The PPA has allowed ODI to institutionalise many of the changes that began in 1998. This time around, leadership was backed up with significant funds.

The story of ODI's research communication is one of many steps forward and many steps backward – partly caused by fluctuations in the availability of funds. The development of the RAPID programme, which provided evidence-based support to the new drive for research communication, and DFID's clear signal of its increased interest on the subject by awarding ODI the PPA helped shift the attention towards communication activities in the organisation. It could be said that funds were necessary but not sufficient.

Conclusions

These four case studies illustrate that a very wide range of factors can influence changes in communication practices in research organisations. We describe them below following RAPID's context, evidence, links and external environment framework.

The internal political context: The internal politics of all organisations have determined the degree and rate of change that has been observed. Highly academic institutional incentives (such as in LSHTM) has made innovations in communication more difficult than in ODI, for example, where the organisation's mandate emphasises the importance of research communication. The leadership of influential individuals within the organisations has also been important: ODI's and IDS's directors and members of the Participation team, for example. And the particular organisational culture towards politics has also been important: for example, UCT has always been politically engaged and therefore focused its research on highly relevant policy issues; LSHTM, IDS and ODI have not necessarily been involved (or, in some cases, even wanted to be involved) in mainstream policy discussions.

The role of evidence: It seems that innovations in research communication were possible at IDS largely due to the evidence base provided by the Participation team (and its reputation). In ODI, change has been easier since the creation of the RAPID group and research on the subject. At the LSHTM, change is being facilitated by the experience of its own RPC and the research and experiences carried out by IDS, ODI and others. Once the discourse and attitude towards research communication changed from dumbing down to contributing to up-

take, procedural and behavioural changes have faced less resistance. This first hurdle required a strong evidence base.

The importance of links: Groups within the organisations as well as links to other researchers, communicators and policymakers have helped, in all cases, to develop research communication. Close linkages with policymakers in the case of UCT have contributed to the development of a more personalised communication approach based on a close relationship between researchers and policymakers. In the case of IDS, communication has been partly influenced by the networks developed by researchers and their partners or peers in developing countries – as well as the subjects of their research. In the LSHTM, communication activities are rapidly developing as a consequence of an internal group of communications officers. As the research communication sector developed (and it became more professionalised) linkages between communication practitioners have been strengthened through both online and face-to-face interaction. This has allowed them to develop and share more and newer forms of communications.

The external environment: External influences have played different yet significant roles in the cases reviewed. The availability of funds is a necessary but insufficient condition for change. Funds for communication are largely dependent on donor's interests – and among the largest donors, DFID seems to have been the most progressive and supportive. The external environment's influence is particularly clear in the cases of the LSHTM and UCT. Although both are academic institutions, UCT is deeply involved in local political processes. Its immediate external environment requires it to be responsive and focus on policy-relevant research. On the other hand, LSHTM's immediate external environment is the scientific community, which does not provide the same incentives.

In this analysis, DFID's 10% guideline can be seen as an important external influence. In the case of the LSHTM, it is clear that is has been highly influential – but so far, this influence has only affected the RPC capacities (the influence that their experience will have on the border organisation is yet to be seen). LSHTM staff also felt that DFID's leadership role in this area is also starting to influence other research donors to invest more in research communication.

In the case of ODI, DFID's 10% rule for RPC did not play a discernible role across the institute as a whole. In fact, ODI's research on research communication contributed to the establishment of the rule. This strand of research has also, in turn, provided further incentives to strengthen communication activities, and contributed to the obtainment of the PPA funds to support the development of a professional communications department.

In the case of IDS, and in particular the Participation team and the Citizenship DRC, DFID's emphasis on communication in the RPC played a rather different role – as more a sparring partner for innovative ideas rather than the original stimulus to improve research communication. IDS's interest in research communication ran in parallel with DFID's through both the information and the research departments since the mid 1990's. Early work on research promotion pathways and agricultural extension within the RNRRS, in which both IDS and ODI were involved, informed all three organisations.

In the case of UCT, the 10% rule has allowed programmes to ring-fence the resources but has not really changed their approach to policy processes. What has been beneficial is the introduction of innovative practices (such as the reference panel of policymakers). And, according to the interviewees, it could be influential towards other donors who have yet to provide similar support to researchers.

Overall, the stories gathered through the small focus groups and interviews suggest the development of two strands of research communication. At the extremes, these can best be

described as highly professional formal communication activities and entirely informal opportunistic communication activities.

Professional formal communication strategies can be seen in some of the less experienced RPC (in terms of communication), who are more likely to follow DFID's guidelines and focus on tangible and formal communication outputs that can account for the 10% of the RPC budget. However, this is also true for the RPC with the most professional communications officers – who benefit from little influence from researchers. The attention to professional looking communication is also present in the more developed central communications departments of ODI and IDS, who have the mandate to communicate their organisation's research and raise its public profile.

On the other hand, informal and opportunistic communication seems more common among more confident and experienced RPC who have the capacity to test new forms of communication not common for researchers and research programmes – such as learning alliances or working with the media – but most of all where researchers are more influential in the direction of the programmes. This is also the case of UCT that, instead of a communications department, relies on individual researchers who are driven by their own involvement in the policy environment their research is trying to influence.

In the middle exists a fertile ground of innovative communication practices, the attention to a broader set of policy actors and a constructive interaction between professional communicators with experienced researchers and practitioners.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

DFID's 10% rule on research communication, and accompanying support, has clearly had a significant positive impact on communication policy and practice within the RPC themselves. But it is less clear what impact the rule itself has had more broadly on the organisations hosting RPC. In the cases evaluated in this report, the impact has been relatively minor, either because the focus on communication remains locked within the individual RPC (e.g. LSHTM and UCT), or because there are other forces at work (e.g. IDS and ODI). DFIDs adoption of the rule, and it's broader engagement in the debate about the value of improved research communication seems to be an important contribution to changing attitudes among other donors, which itself contributes to improving incentives for better research communication among research organisations including, but also beyond those hosting RPC.

"Best and worst understood" parts of the research communication cycle

The part of the research communication cycle that seems best understood concerns the injunction to **involve stakeholders from the beginning of the research process** – witness all the stakeholder consultations, inception meetings, national advisory groups, and relationship-building activities that the RPC have initiated. This has had positive effects in terms of enabling some research institutions to be invited by policymakers to present research findings, and even in some cases to enter into ongoing dialogues with policy bodies. The RPC's understanding on this point seems to be substantially informed by DFID guidelines and personal feedback from DFID.

The part of the research communication cycle that seems least understood is how to use M&E methods strategically in order to **review and assess the impact pathways that are being established, including alliances and partnerships** that are being built with other organisations and networks. The RPC are receiving clear guidance from DFID concerning logframes and reporting requirements, but beyond this they do not seem to be receiving clear and substantive input on more recent M&E models that might make it easier for them to assess their own situation.

Achievements and gaps/challenges

Outputs:

- Overall the RPC seem to have a clear focus on **policy-oriented research**, and they do well when orchestrating a range of **written outputs** that include research reports, academic articles, policy briefings, conference papers, and summaries. They also do well in presenting their research at multiple types of **meetings** for different audiences. Overall many of the RPC are doing fairly well in engaging with and using the media.
- Only a few actively use **popular media** (e.g. film, photographs, radio, blogging, drama). It is perhaps surprising that not more explicitly mention using stories.
- Only a few actively invest in building **networks**.

Process and structure:

- Overall the RPC do well in setting up national advisory groups as well as RPC advisory groups, and most RPC have established a designated **communication position** within the RPC, as well as a **communications working group**.

- Most RPC probably spend **more than the stipulated 10%** of their budget on communication if one includes activities such as writing for different audiences, establishing contacts, communicating with stakeholders as part of the research process, attending meetings and conferences, and so on. Nevertheless, the stipulated 10% has been a useful figure in order to make the investment in communication tangible. In many cases it seems to have provided the impetus to employ a dedicated communication specialist.

- The Healthlink Scoping Study (Chetley and Perkins, 2007) points out that there is a potential for **organisational tension** when the RPC's research aspect is managed by senior and often internationally known researchers, while the communication aspect is managed by a part-time communications officer, who is at times a relatively junior member of staff. This is not the case across all RPC, but it may be sufficiently widespread to present a challenge in relation to the RPC model. Although the 10% minimum spend should make it possible to offer a relatively high salary and to recruit a highly skilled communication professional, this opportunity has not been taken up by all RPC, with some even choosing not to employ a dedicated communications staff member at all. Whether or not this has adverse consequences for the RPC's communication capacity is not possible to tell from the paperwork.

M&E:

- Overall the RPC have followed the DFID reporting requirements and have drawn up comprehensive **logframes**.

- Overall there is little knowledge of M&E methods that would be useful in helping the RPC to review their own **impact pathways** on an ongoing basis (e.g. Impact Pathways, Outcome Mapping), especially the ways in which they have an impact through collaboration and partnership with other networks/organisations. Most high-level reflection and learning around impact is usually relegated to mid-term reviews, carried out by external reviewers.

- Overall there is little differentiation between the quality of **outputs**, **uptake** and **impact (i.e. change)**. Only a few RPC are trying to focus on and learn from actual changes that have come about, e.g. through Most Significant Change.

- Overall there is little knowledge of how to monitor and evaluate **partnerships** or **networks**.

- Overall the RPC do not seem to be inspired by **DFID guidelines on M&E** in the same way that they have (mostly) taken up the DFID communication guidelines. This may be because the current DFID guidelines on M&E only focus on logframes (due to reporting requirements).

Working practices:

- There is a considerable amount of evidence that the greater attention and expenditure on communication is also being translated into qualitative changes in working practices. Most importantly, the RPC overall seem to have done well in organising early **stakeholder workshops** and in seeking out further opportunities for **policy engagement**.

- Overall the research produced by the RPC is somewhat more **demand-driven**, more **applied**, more **multi-disciplinary**, and more oriented towards **open access** than it might have been had it not been generated within an RPC model.

- Overall the RPC seem to be establishing links with **other relevant RPC**, they seem to be doing fairly well in seeking out and generating **multiplier funding**, and they are overall making good use of the **synergy effects** that come from being involved in several projects and networks.

- Overall they are all adopting differentiated approaches in order to communicate with different audiences. Some are also channelling **additional funding into communication**, and seeking out **additional training** in this area.

- Overall most RPC seem to be reflecting seriously on how to create good **North-South partnerships**. But encouraging and strengthening North-South collaboration and South-South collaboration that breaks with previous patterns and works towards Southern research leadership is a challenging task. This is addressed below.

- Overall it is not made explicit in the RPC documentation what kind of **incentives** are offered within the RPC in order to encourage and sustain the shift towards the above working practices. This is an important issue to learn more about, considering that the in-built incentives of the UK and US academic systems (which reward publications in peer-reviewed journals, and monographs) in many ways run counter to the working practices that the RPC model is meant to foster.

Getting research taken up:

- All in all, several of the RPC have already made successful bids at **getting research taken up in policy and practice**. Perhaps more importantly, they have overall focused on establishing impact pathways that will likely yield opportunities for impact in the future. This applies to international, national and sub-national levels of policy formulation and implementation, as well as to DFID policy, and to having research findings picked up by civil society and media, not to mention prestigious academic circles.

Capacity strengthening:

- Overall the RPC do well in supplying **individual team members** with opportunities for strengthening their research and communication skills.

- Some have also taken important steps in the direction of strengthening **Southern capacity for research leadership**. But overall there is perhaps surprisingly little discussion in the RPC documents concerning the challenges involved in promoting greater Southern research leadership. This indicates that most RPC at this stage are focusing on strengthening individual research and communication capacity within their partner teams, rather than attempting to shift research leadership responsibilities. This may be a necessary stage. It may also be a sign, however, that the challenges of shifting and promoting Southern leadership seem beyond the scope or ability of the RPC.

- The same is true of **South-South exchange and collaboration**.

- The issues of **partnership and funding** remain complex, and RPC seem to be reflecting on them and dealing with them to the best of their ability.

- Overall there is relatively little discussion of whether and how capacity, including institutional connections and arrangements, will be sustained **after the life of the RPC**.

- A few RPC are strengthening the capacity of **infomediaries**, such as journalists, as well as strengthening the capacity of **policymakers** to be able to seek out and use research findings.

Comparison with other DFID-funded research programmes

The RPC were compared with 15 other DFID-funded programmes that do not have the rule about a 10% minimum spend on communication. The data collected are based on a desk review (see **Annex 4**), and can therefore only serve as a general guide rather than detailed assessment of the programmes in question. Nevertheless, the data do show the contours of **some significant differences between the RPC and the other DFID-funded research programmes surveyed**. Some of the key differences between the RPC and the other research programmes include:

- The RPC do not only engage in dissemination activities on a project-by-project basis, but also approach **communication at the programme level**, e.g. through a communication strategy and a person responsible for programme-wide communications.
- The RPC are overall more **embedded in their policy and country contexts**, through e.g. inception-phase stakeholder consultations, long-term partnerships with in-country research organisations, in-country advisory groups, ongoing engagement with policymakers, and a comprehensive set of communication activities in-country (including media).
- The RPC are overall more turned towards engagement and communication with **policy and policymakers**, rather than direct engagement with poor communities.

The relatively high score of one of the comparator programmes, namely the **RNRRS** programmes, also deserves mention. It indicates both that the **DFID focus on poverty** was taken on board by these programme managers, and that DFID's emphasis on **dissemination and uptake** led to improvements in the range and quality of these programmes' outputs over time. In many ways, the RPC model could be seen as a further development of the RNRRS model. The **added advantages of the RPC model** lie in its strategic focus on communication from the start, its focus on communication at a programme level, its programme partnerships with Southern institutions, and its engagement with policymakers at programme level rather than on a project-by-project basis.

The evolution of communication in RPC host organisations

Focus group discussions with staff in the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (**LSHTM**), the Institute of Development Studies (**IDS**), the University of Cape Town (**UCT**), and the Overseas Development Institute (**ODI**), identified a very wide range of factors that have influenced the evolution of their communication activities.

- *The internal political context*: including organisational culture, policy orientation, influential individuals and strong leaders.
- *The evidence*: researchers needed to be convinced that simplifying rather than *dumbing down* research findings, could contribute to increased impact on policy and practice. This required a strong evidence base that was more readily available at IDS and ODI than at LSHTM.
- *Links*: groups within the organisations as well as links to other researchers, communicators and policymakers have helped, in all cases, to develop research communication.
- *The external environment*: While the availability of funds form greater communication activity certainly helped, it was the additional support that DFID provided that really made the difference.

DFID's emphasis on research communication seems to have influenced the different organisations in different ways. In the case of the LSHTM, the additional resources and support has contributed substantially to improved communication within the RPC, but has not yet had much influence on the organisation as a whole. In ODI, the RAPID programme's interest in research communication and the funding provided by the PPA to improve the use of evidence in development policy has transformed communications far more than the 10% rule for the RPC hosted there. In IDS, DFID was more a sparring partner than a promoter of research communication, and indeed the development of DFID's approach could be said to have been influenced by IDS's own research communication development process. In the case of UCT, the 10% rule has allowed programmes to ring-fence the resources but has not really changed their approach to policy processes. What has been beneficial is the introduction of innovative practices (such as the reference panel of policymakers).

Overall, the stories gathered through the small focus groups and interviews suggest the development of two strands of research communication. At the extremes, these can best be described as highly professional formal communication activities and entirely informal opportunistic communication activities. In the middle exists a fertile ground of innovative communication practices, the attention to a broader set of policy actors and a constructive interaction between professional communicators with experienced researchers and practitioners.

5.2 Recommendations

The key recommendations from this study are that DFID should:

- **Continue with the policy of a minimum spend on communication in the RPC.** The 10% rule on its own may not have been the single cause of changing work practices. But, combined with the support and follow-up of DFID staff and other aspects of the RPC model (partnerships with Southern institutions, a strategic focus on communication and stakeholders from the start, a focus on engagement with policymakers at a programme level), it has contributed to significant changes in working practices and a higher degree of embeddedness in policy and country contexts compared with other DFID-funded research programmes.

- **Consider rolling out a similar minimum spend on communication across all research programmes funded by DFID, in association with similar communication guidelines and support.** As the comparison between the RPC and other DFID-funded research programmes showed, there are some significant differences between those programmes that have a stipulated 10% spend on communications and those that do not.

- **Consider increasing the 10% threshold to 15% for the next round of RPC –** and announce a review at the end of the period that suggests a possible new increase. While there is still little empirical evidence that proves that improved research communication in RPC has had a greater impact on policy than would have taken place with a lower level of spending on communication, there is a widespread feeling that this is the case. An increase to 15% would not constitute an unmanageable requirement for any RPC, since all RPC already spend more than 10% on communication activities. It would, however, provide a clear signal that DFID is awarding particular attention to research communication – and justify increased monitoring and evaluation of these activities, which could provide the empirical evidence in the future. This would also provide a signal to other donors who might be influenced by this to review their own strategies or follow DFID by increasing their communications requirements.

- **Consider emphasising the importance of Southern research leadership to a greater extent.** Some RPC have taken important steps in this direction. But overall there is little discussion in the RPC documents concerning the challenges involved in promoting greater Southern research leadership, or how to take the first practical steps.

- **Provide more practical support to help RPC to implement the communication policy –** this could include**:**
  - o **Providing incentives for innovation**. An award for best innovations in research communication and best presentation of best practices could be set up to promote innovations in research communication among the RPC.
  - o **Establishing links and partnerships** (at DFID level) with media and new media agencies to promote RPC's research and engagement with journalists.
  - o **Establishing a community of practice**. Set up and facilitate a research communication Community of Practice for RPC's communications staff (but that researchers could also get involved in if they wanted) as a way of expanding the communication groups formed in IDS and LSHTM as well as sharing across

organisations. This CoP could provide backstopping support to RPC by reviewing their communication strategies and M&E systems and providing feedback and guidelines.

- o **Funding more workshops** and other mechanisms to allow RPC communications officers and other staff to share experiences, e.g. exchange visits or peer-to-peer advisory inputs.
- o **Strengthening communication capacity in host research organisations** rather than in the individual RPC.
- o **Establishing a communication support centre** for all RPCs to share.

- **Review the M&E guidelines and support given to the RPC.** This process has already been started. Drawing on early findings from this report, a workshop was held at DFID on 15 September 2008 to discuss how M&E guidelines given to the RPC might be broadened and made more appropriate to the challenges they face. The key recommendations are that RPC should establish simple systems to track:
  - o **Strategy and direction:** The basic plan that the research programme is following.
  - o **Management:** The systems, processes and competencies that the programme has in place in order to ensure that the overall strategy is carried out.
  - o **The quality of the outputs:** The tangible goods and services that a research programme produces (e.g. journal articles, policy briefs, website, meetings, events, networks, etc).
  - o **Uptake:** Direct responses to the research programme (e.g. its research is mentioned in a government policy paper, on a range of websites, referred to in a newspaper article, etc).
  - o **Outcomes/impacts:** Changes in behaviour, knowledge, policies, capacities and/or practices that the research has contributed to, directly or indirectly (e.g. a change in government policy implementation, a change in working practices among NGO practitioners, a reduction of poverty in a certain area, strengthened livelihoods, strengthened civil society input into policy processes, etc).

  The full report of the workshop in **Annex 7** outlines a range of compulsory and optional tools that could be used for this, with links to more details about how they can be used. This resource has been set up as an on line wiki that the RPC could use and develop further.

- **Fund research (maybe via the CoP) on research communication.** As a way of promoting innovation, new approaches and developing an evidence base for future adoption (like what happened in IDS with the participation group and how is it happening with RAPID), DFID should continue to fund research on the subject. Researchers are more likely to base their decisions on research-based evidence and not just 'experience' or common sense from other 'industries'. The research should have four dimensions:
  - o Systematic collection of empirical evidence of the impact of improved research communication.
  - o Identification of which approaches to research communication work best in which contexts and the development of approaches and frameworks to help research teams develop context-specific communication and engagement strategies.
  - o Research into the broader institutional incentives affecting development researchers, and what can be done to orientate them more towards policy and practice rather than academic publications.
  - o Gathering success stories and practical examples of how to do it.

- **Continue to lobby other research donors** and encourage them to also invest more in research communication.

Annex 1: Study objectives and approach

Review of policy to support better research communication in DFID-funded research: A proposal from ODI

DFID's Central Research Department (CRD) wishes to learn from the experience of the current research funding framework's policies on communications in Research Programme Consortia (RPC), to identify what further support and incentives would promote greater research uptake in the new research strategy.

Objectives

The objectives of this review are:

1. To assess the effectiveness of DFID's policy (of minimum spend of 10% on communications in RPC) in making research more appropriate for different audiences; more accessible; and taken up in policy and practice.

2. To capture (highlight) the achievements of the policy in both getting research taken up, and building capacity amongst researchers and those intermediaries playing a role in uptake. Specific attention should be paid to innovatory processes and unintended consequences of the policy and its implementation, as well as incentives to effective communication provided by the RPC management.

3. To recommend the structures, processes, and organisational arrangements that would make uptake in policy and practice more likely in future. What implications for DFID and its future support to RPC and other models of DFID-funded research including financial and human resources.

4. To propose a framework for assessing the cost effectiveness of information services within research, including outlining M+E indicators that are useful in capturing the different spheres of research uptake and capacity building

5. To unearth evidence of enhanced individual and institutional capabilities to communicate research, and to offer insights into which parts of the research communication cycle are best and worst understood and systematically undertaken.

The challenge will be to go beyond the rather generic material that has been produced on this subject before to include a) empirical (if possible, or at least systematic) evidence of the impact of greater attention and expenditure on communications and b) evidence-based recommendations on structures, processes, and organisational arrangements that would make uptake in policy and practice more likely in future, and a framework for assessing the cost effectiveness of information services within research.

ODI's approach

ODI has been working on this topic for several years, has undertaken a number of studies, and been involved in several other processes seeking to shed light in this area, but there is little empirical evidence of what works and why, as confirmed by a recent study by the World Bank (Inagaki, 2007)[8]. So to make this relatively small and rapid review worthwhile, it will be necessary to combine a systematic review of existing RPC documentation, a limited amount of very focused new data collection, and the pooling of existing knowledge among the proposed RAPID Team and DFID Central Research Department Communications Team through an iterative series of activities.

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8 Communicating the Impact of Communication for Development Recent Trends in Empirical Research Author. Nobuya Inagaki. The World Bank. 2007 (http://www.comminit.com/en/node/266501)

Process

1. A detailed briefing from the communications Team in DFID.

2. A review of documents produced by RPC, specifically Communication Strategies written as part of Inception Reports, and Annual Reports, other related documentation, including Scoping Study produced by Healthlink as background to the Research Strategy process, any evaluation reports such as Mid-Term Reviews of RPC where available, and other documentation suggested by DFID and/or the ODI Team. The results of this will be presented in an interim report (Report 1). By late March.

3. A ½ day meeting to discuss this report with the DFID Central Research Department Communications Team to agree how best to gather additional evidence. The results of this will be captured in a document outlining further evidence-gathering activities (Report 2). Late March / early April.

4. Further evidence-gathering which may include:

   ▪ Further systematic literature review of support for research communication for comparisons, including but not restricted to IDRC and World Bank.

   ▪ Telephone or face-to-face interviews with key informants or focus group discussions to identify information and knowledge that is embedded within staff and not captured in written documentation.

   ▪ Telephone consultations with at least two RPC' southern partners.

   ▪ Face-to-face and/or telephone interviews with relevant DFID personnel and consultants who have been involved in the evaluation of research communication within RPC.

   The results of this will be presented in a second interim report (Report 3).

5. A one-day workshop with the DFID Central Research Department Communications Team DFID to consider these alongside the tacit knowledge among people at the workshop brainstorm the recommendations ideas for the final report (Report 4). This will be produced by the end of April.

Outputs:

1. **A Review of Key Documents**. This will include:

   ▪ Evidence of how the RPC spent their communication budgets (from the Communication strategies), the relevant to the overall aim of the RPC and recorded impact (from MTRs etc).

   ▪ Other evidence of the impact of better communication of research on policy and practice (especially empirical evidence – of which we already know there is little).

   ▪ Evidence of effective approaches to measuring impact.

   ▪ People who could be approached to provide further evidence.

   ▪ A possible approach to gathering more empirical evidence of impact

2. **Plans for further evidence-gathering**.

3. **A Detailed Research Report**. This will provide the results of the research and recommendations for structures, processes, and organisational arrangements that would make uptake in policy and practice more likely in future, and a framework for assessing the cost effectiveness of information services within research.

4. **Final Report**: A final report capturing the results of the research and the deliberations at the workshop. Given the scale and time-frame of this project this will focus on a small range of simple practical procedures (based on an intelligent interpretation of the existing evidence) with recommendations for how they could be developed further through use.

Annex 2: Phase 2 approach

Outline plan for phase 2

1. Fleshing out the detail in the existing report by:

   - Reviewing it to identify a) specific instances of behaviour change and b) policy impact worth exploring in more depth (aiming for some sort of balance across sectors / levels / contexts etc

   - Telephone interviews with people to explore reasons for a) and to collect more detail about b) – including inviting them to write short "Stories of Change" to a standard format (*This would provide more detail in the existing report – the Stories of Change would be in an Appendix*)

2. "Mapping" the policy engagement/communication activities (to try to get a visual representation):

   - Identified in the current report

   - Review of documentation from DFID RNRRS/IUDD and other DFID-funded research programmes to map the 'without' group (*This would be a new chapter in the report*)

3. Tracking organisational change over the last decade (or so) to explore when, why and how organisational behaviour changed, through detailed interviews with RPC/DRC/PIs and other senior Institution staff in LSHTM (and/or IDS) and (if possible) one of the overseas RPC, e.g. the University of Cape Town (*This would be a new chapter in the report*)

4. Integrating all of the above into the report

5. Planning and preparation for the Comms workshop

6. 1 day at the Comms Workshop

7. Final workshop with DFID and selected experts to develop framework etc.

Annex 3: List of DFID-funded RPC

ABBA   Addressing the balance of burden in AIDS
                  Director: Dr Dave Haran, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
                  Communications contact: Teresa Jackson
                  www.liv.ac.uk/lstm/research/abba

Citizenship   Development research centre on citizenship, participation and accountability
                  Director: Dr John Gaventa, IDS
                  Communications contacts: Joanne Wheeler, Alison Dunn
                  www.drc-citizenship.org

COMDIS   Communicable diseases, vulnerability, risk and poverty
                  Directors: Profs John Walley and James Newell, University of Leeds
                  Communications contacts: John Walley / Sunil Mehra / Annabelle South
                  www.leeds.ac.uk/lihs/ihsphr_ihd/research/COMDIS.htm

CPRC   Chronic poverty research centre
                  Director: Dr Andrew Shepherd, ODI (Lead institution: IDPM)
                  Communications contact: Julia Brunt
                  www.chronicpoverty.org

CREATE   Consortium for research on educational access, transitions and equity
                  Director: Prof Keith Lewin, University of Sussex
                  Communications contact: Fran Hunt
                  www.create-rpc.org

CREHS   Consortium for research on equitable health systems
                  Director: Dr Kara Hanson, LSHTM
                  Communications contact: Nicola Lord
                  www.crehs.lshtm.ac.uk

CRISE   Centre for research on inequality, human security and ethnicity
                  Director: Prof Frances Stewart, University of Oxford
                  Communications contact: Jo Boyce
                  www.crise.ox.ac.uk

CSRC   Crisis states research centre
                  Director: Prof James Putzel, LSE
                  Communications contact: Joost van der Zwan
                  www.crisisstates.com

EdQual   Implementing education quality in low-income countries
                  Director: Prof Leon Tikly, University of Bristol
                  Communications contact: Angeline Barrett
                  www.edqual.org

EfA   Evidence for action on HIV treatment and care systems
                  Director: Prof David Ross, LSHTM
                  Communications contact: Annabelle South
                  www.evidence4action.org

Effective   Best available evidence in the health sector
Health Care   Director: Prof Paul Garner, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
                  Communications contact: Helen Smith
                  www.liv.ac.uk/evidence

Future
Health
Systems
Making health systems work for the poor
Director: Prof David H. Peters, Johns Hopkins University
Communications contact: Samantha Reddin (IDS)
www.futurehealthsystems.org

Future
State
Centre for the future state
Director: Prof Mick Moore, IDS
Communications contacts: Laura Turquet, Sue Unsworth
www2.ids.ac.uk/gdr/cfs

IFG
Improving institutions for pro-poor growth
Director: Prof Paul Collier, University of Oxford
Communications contact: Tessa Bold
Website: pending

IPPG
Improving institutions for pro-poor growth
Directors: Prof Kunal Sen, IDPM, Dr Adrian Leftwich, University of York
Communications contact: Adrian Leftwich
www.ippg.org.uk

MHAPP
The mental health and poverty project
Director: Prof Alan Flisher, University of Cape Town
Communications contacts: Michelle Funk or Alan Flisher
http://workhorse.pry.uct.ac.za:8080/MHAPP

Migration
Development research centre on migration, globalisation and poverty
Director: Prof Richard Black, IDS
Communications contact: Saskia Gent
www.migrationdrc.org

Pathways
Pathways of women's empowerment
Director: Prof Andrea Cornwall, IDS
Communications contacts: Jenny Edwards / Tessa Lewin
www.pathways-of-empowerment.org

PISCES
Policy innovation systems for clean energy security
Director: Prof Judi Wakhungu, African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS)
Communications contact: Harrison Maganga
www.pisces.or.ke

Power
Power, politics and the state[9]
Director: Prof David Booth, ODI
Communications contact: Sonia Sezille
Website: pending

RaD
Religions and development research programme consortium
Director: Prof Carole Rakodi, University of Birmingham
Communications contact: Carole Rakodi
www.rad.bham.ac.uk

Realising
Rights
Sexual and reproductive health for poor and vulnerable populations
Director: Dr Hilary Standing, IDS
Communications contact: Samantha Reddin
www.realising-rights.org

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[9] The Power, politics and the state RPC was set up too recently to be included in this review

RECOUP   Educational outcomes and poverty
Director: Prof Christopher Colclough, University of Cambridge
Communications contact: Bolormaa Shagdar
www.educ.cam.ac.uk/recoup

RiPPLE   Research-inspired policy and practice learning in Ethiopia and the Nile region
Director: Dr Alan Nicol, ODI
Communications contact: Simret Yasabu
www.rippleethiopia.org

RIU   Research into use
Director: Tim Donaldson, NR International
Communications contact: Wyn Richards
www.researchintouse.com

SRH & HIV   Sexual and reproductive health and HIV in developing countries
Director: Prof David Mabey, LSHTM
Communications contacts: Tamsin Kelk, Onno Dekker
www.lshtm.ac.uk/dfid/aids

TARGETS   Effective tools and strategies for communicable disease control
Director: Prof John Porter, LSHTM
Communications contacts: Alexandra Coldham, Rhianon Williams
www.lshtm.ac.uk/dfid/targets

Towards 4+5   Achieving MDGs 4 and 5: Policy for mother and infant care
Director: Prof Anthony Costello, UCL
Communications contact: David Osrin
www.towards4and5.org.uk

WEMC   Women's empowerment in Muslim contexts
Director: Prof Vivienne Wee, City University of Hong Kong
Communications contact: Vivienne Wee
www.wemc.com.hk

Young Lives   An international study of childhood poverty
Director: Dr Jo Boyden, University of Oxford
Communications contact: Falguni Patel
www.younglives.org.uk

Annex 4: List of documents reviewed

Documents and websites reviewed for chapters 2 and 3

RPC documents:

- ABBA Communications Strategy, January 2007
- ABBA Annual Report, for June 2006-May 2007
- Citizenship DRC Mid-Term Review, 2004
- Citizenship DRC Communications Strategy, March 2006
- Citizenship DRC Annual Report, for Oct 2005-Sept 2006
- COMDIS Communications Strategy, 2006
- COMDIS Annual Report, for April 2006-March 2007
- CPRC Engagement and Communications Strategy, July 2006
- CPRC Annual Report, Oct 2005-Sept 2006
- CREATE Communications Strategy, July 2006
- CREATE Annual Report, with updated Communications Strategy, for Jan 2007-Dec 2007
- CREHS Communications Strategy, 2006
- CREHS Annual Report, for April 2005-March 2006
- CRISE Annual Report, April 2007
- CRISE Communications Strategy, 2006 or 2007
- CSRC Communications Strategy, July 2006
- CSRC Annual Report, for Oct 2005-Sept 2006
- EdQual Communications Strategy, May 2006
- EdQual Annual Report, for Sept 2006-Sept 2007
- EfA Inception Report, with Communications Strategy, January 2007
- EfA Annual Report, for July 2006-June 2007
- EfA Communications Strategy, updated February 2008
- Effective Health Care Annual Report, for March 2006-April 2007
- Effective Health Care Communications Strategy, April 2007
- Future Health Systems Annual Report, for Oct 2005-Sept 2006
- Future Health Systems Communications Strategy, 2006 or 2007
- Future State Communications Strategy, May 2007
- Future State Annual Report, for July 2006-July 2007
- IFG Inception Report, with Communications Strategy, July 2007
- IPPG Communications Strategy, February 2006
- IPPG Annual Report, for Sept 2005-Aug 2006
- MHAPP Communications Strategy, January 2006
- MHAPP Annual Report, for Aug 2006-July 2007
- Migration DRC Communications Strategy, March 2007
- Migration DRC Annual Report, for June 2006-May 2007
- Pathways Communications Strategy, 2006 or 2007
- Pathways Annual Report, for March 2007-Feb 2008
- PISCES Inception Report, with Communications Strategy, December 2007

- PISCES Communications Strategy, 2008
- RaD Communications Strategy, June 2007
- RaD Annual Report, for Sept 2006-Aug 2007
- Realising Rights Communications Strategy, 2006
- Realising Rights Annual Report, for March 2006-March 2007
- RECOUP Communications Strategy, April 2006
- RECOUP Annual Report, for Oct 2005-Sept 2006
- RiPPLE Annual Report, for Jan 2007-June 2007
- RiPPLE Communications Strategy, October 2007
- RIU Interim Inception Report, with draft communications strategy, for July 2006-Dec 2006
- SRH & HIV Annual Report, for July 2005-June 2006
- SRH & HIV Communications Strategy, revised 2007
- TARGETS Annual Report, for May 2005-May 2006
- TARGETS Communications Strategy, updated 2007
- Towards 4+5 Communications Strategy, December 2005
- Towards 4+5 Annual Report, with revised Communications Strategy, for 2006-07
- WEMC Communications Strategy, 2006
- WEMC Annual Report, for July 2006-June 2007
- Young Lives Communications Strategy, May 2007
- Young Lives Annual Report, for Oct 2006-Sept 2007
- Some RPC newsletters were also consulted.

Websites:

All RPC websites were consulted (for websites see Annex 3).

Other documents:

- Butcher, C. and G. Yaron (2006) Monitoring and Evaluation of Research Communication. Healthlink: London, UK. (Available at: http://www.healthlink.org.uk/PDFs/scoping.pdf)
- Chetley, A. and N. Perkins (2007) Improving uptake of DFID research: A review of options. Healthink: London, UK.
- DFID Central Research Department (2005) Communication of Research: Guidance Notes for Research Programme Consortia. DFID: London, UK. (Available at: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/research/guidance.asp).
- DFID Central Research Department (2006) Monitoring and Evaluation: A Guide for DFID-Contracted Research Programmes. DFID: London, UK. (Available at: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/research/evaluations.asp).
- DFID Central Research Department (2006) Lessons Learnt on Designing Communication Strategies for Research Programmes. Report of a workshop held at DFID, 26 July 2006. DFID, London, UK. (Available at: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/research/guidance.asp)
- DFID Central Research Department (2007) Lessons Learnt in Research Communication: Monitoring and Evaluation and Capacity Development. Report of a lesson-learning workshop held at DFID, 2 August 2007. DFID: London, UK. (Available at: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/research/guidance.asp)
- Perkins, N. et al. (2006) Proving our worth: Developing capacity for the monitoring and evaluation of communicating research in development. Healthlink: London, UK. (Available at: http://www.healthlink.org.uk/PDFs/mande_summary.pdf)

Documents and websites reviewed for chapter 5

Programme documents:

(Unless otherwise indicated, the following Annual Reports can be found at
www.research4development.info)

- AFGRP Project R5502 Project Summary
  (www.research4development.info/SearchResearchDatabase.asp?ProjectID=61).

- AHP Annual Report 2005/06

- Arnold, E., J. Court, J. Stroyan and J. Young (2005) 'Evaluation of DFID's Engineering Knowledge and Research (EngKaR) Programme', ODI and TEchnopolis
  (www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Projects?R0145).

- Barnett, A. (2006) 'Journeying from research to innovation: Lessons from the Department for International Development's Crop Post-Harvest Research Programme "Partnerships for Innovation", The Policy Practice (www.thepolicypractice.com/papers/1.pdf).

- CPHP Annual Report 2003/04

- CPP Annual Report 2004/05

- FMSP: Assessing Developmental Impact, March 2006
  (www.fmsp.org.uk/Documents/keylessons/Impact%20Brief%20MArch%202006.pdf).

- FMSP: Impact of DFID funded research on fisheries management: Key lessons for policy, 2005
  (www.fmsp.org.uk/Documents/keylessons/policy_impact_brief.pdf).

- FRP Annual Report 2004/05

- LPP Annual Report 2004/05

- LTS International, Noragric and Oxford Policy Management (2005) 'Evaluation of DFID Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy', EVD659, DFID, London
  (www.dfid.gov.uk/aboutdfid/performance/files/ev659.asp).

- MMV Annual Report 2006

- MMV At A Glance 2007
  (www.research4development.info/PDF/Outputs/MMV/07MMVGlance.pdf).

- NRSP Project R5172 Final Technical Report
  (www.research4development.info/PDF/Outputs/NatResSys/R5172FTR.pdf).

- NRSP Project R6799 Final Technical Report
  (www.research4development.info/PDF/Outputs/R6799FTR.pdf).

- Penman, D., et al (2002) 'Genetic management of non-indigenous carps for low input aquaculture systems in Asia' (AFGRP Project R7590) *Aquaculture News* April 2002
  (www.research4development.info/PDF/Outputs/RLAquanewsPenmanR7590.pdf).

- PHFRP Annual Report 2004/05

- PSP: 'The status of "on-farm" seed priming and related work funded by the DFID Plant Sciences Research Programme' (by D. Harris, excerpt from *PSP: Highlights & Impact*)
  (http://www.research4development.info/PDF/Outputs/RLPSRImpactAss8.pdf).

- PSP: 'Research highlight: Client-oriented breeding sparks a low-input green revolution in Bangladesh' (excerpt from PSP Annual Report 2004)
  (http://www.research4development.info/PDF/Outputs/RLPSRAnnRepHigh1.pdf).

- PSP: 'Research highlight: Genetic transformation for nematode resistance in rice, potato and cooking bananas for developing countries' (excerpt from PSP Annual Report 2004)
  (http://www.research4development.info/PDF/Outputs/RLPSRAnnRepHigh4.pdf).

- RALF Annual Report 2005/06 (www.icarda.cgiar.org/RALFweb/ProgressReports/AnnualReport-Jan19-2005-January31-2006.pdf).

Websites:

- www.fmsp.org.uk
- www.phfp.uk.com
- www.dfid-ahp.org.uk
- www.lpp.uk.com
- www.cphp.uk.com
- www.cpp.uk.com
- www.frp.uk.com
- www.nrsp.org
- www.ctu.mrc.ac.uk/dart
- www.ctu.mrc.ac.uk/arrow
- www.mmv.org
- www.icarda.cgiar.org/RALFweb/RALF.htm

Annex 5: Stories of Change

This annex presents the following Stories of Change:

Stories of internal behaviour change

- CPRC: Working as a network
- Crisis States: Face-to-face policy engagement
- EdQual: Facilitating Southern-led research
- Pathways: Engaging the public
- RiPPLE: Making research more demand-driven
- Future State: Linking good taxation to good governance

Stories of national policy impact

- COMDIS: Realigning Chinese Tuberculosis policy and practice
- CREATE: Thinking beyond enrolment in Ghana's Ministry of Education
- EfA: Getting HIV status in the Malawian 'health passport'

Stories of regional/ local policy impact

- ABBA: Standardising support for vulnerable children in Amangwe village, South Africa
- Young Lives: Integrating child-focused policy across departments in Andhra Pradesh, India

CPRC: Working as a network

In recent years, the CPRC has dedicated much energy to creating a successful West African regional network. This has taken time, and different partners are at different stages, but the network is now up and running with research partners in five countries operating significant research programmes for at least the last nine months. Now that country-level work has started to take off, the regional approach has begun to yield dividends in terms of stronger southern leadership, south-south collaboration, and opportunities for comparative work.

Although the CPRC worked directly with partners in other parts of Africa, working in a network was a new approach for all involved. The CPRC recognised that not having research from Western Africa was a significant gap and that it was also important to engage in policy processes to reduce the persistent chronic poverty there. Language barriers, however, were proving initially difficult when engaging in the region.

The CPRC had resources available to dedicate towards developing partnerships, but the challenge was how best to expand into the region. Establishing a collaborative network in francophone countries was seen as an important way to devolve responsibility, work more equitably with partners and also as a potential method for overcoming language barriers. The challenge became, therefore, how to take a regional approach as opposed to working locally with individual partners.

In order to establish the network, the programme invested heavily in terms of time and dedication by the directors and programme manager. Capitalising on relationships that had been fostered over the years by directors and researchers, the CPRC identified IED Afrique in Senegal as a 'lead partner'. IED Afrique then selected strong in-country partners in the region to establish the network. The coordinating partner was allocated funds for coordinating and administrative costs in order to develop and maintain the network. In terms of the latter, it was all down to communication – there were visits both ways, teleconferencing and frequent emailing. Importantly, researchers from all organisations were involved in developing research plans. This helped increase ownership of the research agenda, but it was (and remains) difficult to find a good balance between freedom and autonomy, in particular because CPRC are the ones ultimately held to account.

The network is now working very well, with research is going ahead at a brisk pace. All partners are currently running two- or three-year, £80–100K research projects. In comparison to other CPRC partners, the West African organisations tend to have more autonomy thanks to the network.

In terms of things that worked well, building strong relationships with a local partner was key to getting the network off the ground. Also, holding workshops there as opposed to in the UK helped generate interest in the network, especially since the workshops focused more on establishing research agenda over administrative details. One main challenge is that building a network is very cost-intensive and most of the remaining money has been allocated.

It is unclear how the 10% policy contributed to this initiative. Certainly, it has allowed the CPRC room to invest more resources into networking and community-building, and it was effective in prompting discussions about communication activities. All network partners are aware of the 10% rule, and most are spending more than 10% on communications activities.

For this particular network, the focus has turned to keeping the programme alive after funding runs out in 2010. The CPRC also works in South Africa and is hoping to establish a similar research network across Southern Africa.

More information about the network partners and their activities is available at http://www.chronicpoverty.org/8/partners-pages.php.

Crisis States: Face-to-face policy engagement

When moving into its second five-year phase of research in 2006, The Crisis States Research Centre adopted a new Communications Strategy that placed particular emphasis on conducting face-to-face meetings with a wide range of organisations in the policy community while our research plans were still being developed. This was a conscious shift in the Centre's approach aimed at heightening direct engagement and the two-way flow of ideas between research and policy, both in the Northern and Southern contexts in which they work.

The impetus for this change was our analysis of Phase 1 work where we approached the policy community only with the results of research. This had meant that we had less contact with policy-makers during the research process. Our research then was also less influenced by current concerns in the policy world.

The earliest expression of this approach was our effort to present our research plans to a wide range of organisations at the start of Phase Two. These initial stakeholder meetings were a way of ensuring that the proposed research programme would be relevant and accessible to users, but also had the effect of sparking great interest in the research from the outset.

The new approach stemmed in part from a desire to engage with and influence specific policymakers through a much more clearly targeted strategy than had previously been employed. This involved a decision to channel more of our human and financial resources into meetings rather than policy briefings aimed a general policy audience. We have done this through three mechanisms: (1) We have written and presented papers in policy fora; (2) we have undertaken meetings systematically with policy organisations to discuss our research so that they have been aware of us and what we were doing; (3) we have been highly responsive to invitations to participate in workshops and conferences held in the policy community where we have spoken to insights coming out of our research while it is still on-going.

In the two and a half years since this strategy was adopted, researchers within the Centre have interacted with an extremely diverse range of individuals and organisations, including: officials from the UK government in such departments as DFID, FCO and MoD; officials from donor governments including the US, France, the Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Belgium, Denmark and Australia; the UN and many of its subdivisions ranging from UNDP and the UN Commission for Africa to MONUC in the DR Congo and UNAMA in Afghanistan; representatives of the World Bank, OECD, African Union, African Development Bank, IGAD and SADC; politicians and officials in Colombia, DR Congo, Zambia, Uganda, South Africa, Sudan, Palestine, and Bosnia and Herzegovina; numerous NGOs, media and research organisations; and practitioners such as army Majors and Security Sector Reform teams.

The strategy has posed several challenges. Initiating behaviour change among Southern partners with whom we have less direct contact was one, especially given that for some of our Southern researchers there are very real personal security risks involved in speaking either publicly or in policy circles about the questions of violent conflict and state fragility with which our Centre is engaged. From a central administration point of view, there is also the challenge of monitoring these activities on behalf of our researchers and ensuring that all policy activities are communicated back to the Centre.

Nevertheless, a major change in behaviour did occur as a result of the shift in strategy – one that we believe has been very valuable for bringing our research into direct conversation with policymakers and facilitating influence in both directions. This approach has also resulted in a notable increase in demand for our researchers' expertise by people in a wide range of policy organisations.

The challenge of how these activities can be 'measured' or assessed in terms of 'policy impact' remains, and this will be central to thinking about how we plan our communications for the second half of Phase Two. Despite difficulties in proving impact, however, we certainly do not feel that these face-to-face interactions are something that should be downgraded; rather the strategy should be further developed to ensure that we are targeting all of the most important policy organisations in our efforts to set up these meetings, and doing so at the most accessible and responsive levels.

EdQual: Facilitating Southern-led research

In the EdQual Research Programme Consortium (RPC), there has been a conscious effort to build capacity and facilitate Southern-led research. The RPC runs five large-scale projects, of which four are led by African partner institutions: the University of Witswaterand in Johannesburg, the Kigali Institute of Education in Rwanda, the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. Each one of these programmes has one or two UK- based researchers who play a supportive, resource role.

This was a departure from the way in which research for development has traditionally been funded and conducted. In the past, northern donors might put out a call, then researchers based in the same country would respond to it, and would then start looking for research partners in the south. The northern partner would often take the lead in writing the proposal and setting the research agenda. The southern partner would usually collect data and contribute to analysis. Finally, the northern partner would often write the academic outputs with the research partner as a co-author. This was a well-established pattern, but the RPC, which functioned as a consortium from the outset, allowed a different way of researching.

But taking an unfamiliar approach to organising truly collaborative research was not entirely straightforward. Indeed, filling the 'vacuum of responsibility' was an early challenge to overcome. In other words, partners from the North and South both expected leadership from the other group. This became quickly apparent during the inception phase when proposals were submitted from southern partners that revealed a lack of experience actually writing research proposals and not realising what was involved – some of the proposals didn't include budgets, for example.

In terms of filling the vacuum of responsibility, it was a matter of experimentation, and it played out differently in different projects. In some projects more capacity development and guidance was needed than in others. Also some of the UK-based researchers fell more naturally into the proactive support role than others. In all cases though, they were careful not to slip into old, northern-led research patterns. Rather, they tried to take a driving and mentoring role without assuming leadership, acting as an available resource instead of taking charge or doing.

In some cases, the resource role fell to other project partners outside of Africa or the UK – particularly researcher partners the Institute for Educational Development (IED) at the Aga Khan University, Pakistan and the Universidad de la Fontera in Chile who had more relevant experience in many cases. These organisations were brought in at the beginning of the RPC and in the case of the IED have also conducted some limited research in Pakistan.

The support activities have meant that lead researchers are now confidently in the lead. The UK-based researchers have also arrived at roles in which they are comfortable - mainly in facilitating communication between partners. The state of the communication infrastructure is somewhat difficult between Tanzanian and Ghanaian partners, for example, but can work better from the UK. The actual research is being led by the southern partners, and there has been less chasing up – as they have generally been sticking to their own schedule.

Finding the proper balance of mentoring versus southern leadership continues to be a challenge, and relationships need to be renegotiated at each phase of the research. The programme director has had to be a strong driving force to get outputs produced, for instance, by setting output targets. In order to better facilitate this balance, trying to develop a greater understanding of the different sorts of pressures southern research partners are facing has been essential. If it's a matter of heavy teaching loads or too few colleagues with whom to collaborate and debate, then different support may be needed. It's also been difficult working around different constraints to people's time.

The process of filling the 'vacuum of responsibility' has been largely people-driven. Some from the UK fell quite naturally into these facilitative roles, and others were able to negotiate responsibilities quite quickly after a rocky start. This way of working tended to increase time demands. Capacity building workshops on proposal writing had to be hastily organised and the whole proposal writing process took longer then anticipated.

With most of the research completed, the next step is to move onto producing outputs. This has been testing the working relationships as they are often very time-intensive. Again, the goal is not to have northern partners lead on writing the outputs, but to make sure that they play a mentoring role as co-authors and reviewers.

It is likely that other requirements for RPC played a larger role in establishing cooperative approaches to research, but the communications requirement has certainly facilitated its evolution. It has been difficult to determine exactly what constitutes communications in the programme, but many of the African partners have attended and presented at conferences. This has helped set research deadlines and build confidence among the research partners to take the lead.

More information about Edqual and its southern-led research can be found in its upcoming annual report due out at end of September and will be available on the Edqual website, http://www.edqual.org/.

Pathways: Engaging the public

The DFID 10% communications spending rule helped focus our mind within the Pathways RPC on what we really wanted our communicating to do. In the proposal period, the potential Pathways partners met with communications specialists at IDS to map out our audiences and to start thinking about how we were going to engage with them. We developed this thinking further during the Inception Period and during a management meeting brainstorming in 2006 we categorised our potential audiences on a scale from our immediate networks, predisposed to finding out about our work, up to those who see women's empowerment as disrupting social order and who are actively hostile to this issue. However, weaved throughout these audiences are those whose lives all the other actors seek to improve and 'empower', i.e. the 'ordinary women'. We also started to unpick the concept of 'communications' itself and how we would approach this. We decided to see it not only as a tool to disseminate our research, but as a method and as a focus of research – particularly the media's role in shaping the construct of female.

Our challenge was to get past thinking of communications in a traditional way: doing the research, writing a paper and sending it out. This is still important but we wanted to energise this by using popular communications. We also wanted to widen the audience we reached by strategic use of partnerships. We needed to focus our energies on those within our potential audiences who we felt were most important to engage with. With a limited budget, accessing the general public is difficult, but by cultivating links with networks who have this access we could disseminate our work more widely.

Our project proposals had already highlighted possible exciting communications opportunities. In January 2007 we developed our thinking on these further by holding an exchange at IDS with Pathways team members participating together with facilitators from the IDS central communications team and IDS knowledge services. This was the beginnings of our communications network which was further catalysed by the appointment of our Communications and Learning Officer, Tessa Lewin in July 2007. Since then our work in this area has become more and more creative. In early 2007, NEIM (the Pathways Brazil partner) used the famous Salvador Carnival to voice their protest against the failure of the State Governor to create a Secretariat for Women's Policies. Their procession was filmed and placed on YouTube with links from the Pathways main website. The Brazil team are also using film in their research on 'Changing Times, Changing Lives', working with young students and girls from the Plataforma region of Bahia to interview their mothers and grandmothers on how life has changed for them. Tessa has launched a documentary film scheme 'Real World', in collaboration with Screen South (a branch of the Film Council), which supports young directors to produce films based on Pathways research. The films will be produced over the course of 2008 and it is hoped they will be broadcast to a wide audience. The Bangladesh team have got together with local filmmakers to produce a film depicting 'Stories of Change' and also held a very successful competition during 2007 for amateur photographers to illustrate the changing images of women in Bangladesh. Documentography – renowned photojournalists – have been working with Pathways West Africa to build capacity in photojournalism. The West Africa team are also working with various players in the music business to reflect on the content of song lyrics and how they impact on the representation of women. They will be holding a song competition later on in 2008 to encourage the creation of more positive images of women. The Middle East team have been working with the Women and Memory Forum to examine traditional fairy stories and how they perpetuate female stereotypes and to work on rewriting and performing new stories which empower women with more positive role models. Tessa will be working with the team in Egypt in October to produce an animated film of one of the rewritten stories.

Our innovative approach to communications is helping to inspire us, excite us and make us gel as a team. We have also been receiving very positive responses from outside Pathways and this is helping in our aim of using networks to widen our reach. For instance, a TV commissioning editor is providing advice on the Real World documentary scheme and we are hoping they may broadcast the final productions. Following the Brazilian carnival protest, the Latin America Hub Convenor, Cecilia Sardenberg, was invited to join the advisory committees of the Federal Government Special Secretary for Women's Policies, the Pro-Gender Equity Programme and the Women and Science network.

DFID's promotion of the importance of communications, certainly made us think more strategically on this issue and we have moved beyond the minimum 10% spending. Many in our team – particularly the Brazilian members – had already been involved in exciting activist work, but this programme has

given us the opportunity and inspiration to be more innovative in our communications work. Having a strong communications core team has kept our momentum going and moved us on far from our starting point.

Now our partners' capacity in this area has been increased we are determined to develop it further. We are investigating funding to keep a network going beyond the life of the programme – we do not want to lose the enthusiasm which has been sparked.

More information on the Pathways communication work can be found on the website at www.pathways-of-empowerment.org and also on 2007/08 Annual Report webpages at www.pathways-of-empowerment.org/Annual%20Report/AnnualReport.html

RiPPLE: Making research more demand-driven

Focusing on issues of water and sanitation in Ethiopia, RiPPLE has sought to make research more demand-driven through establishing collaborative Learning and Practice Alliances (LPAs). These LPAs bring together diverse stakeholders, including donors, service deliverers, practitioners, researchers and government bodies to discuss, debate and learn about research and practice in the water sector. This is one strand of a three-pronged communication strategy that involves internal learning and exchange, broader dialogue and dissemination of research findings and creating an enabling environment for the uptake of research into policy.

In Ethiopia, the lines between researchers, policy-makers and beneficiaries is traditionally distinct. This meant that the agenda of various stakeholders at best lacked coordination and at worst were in direct competition. Recognising these challenges, the International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC), one of the main consortium partners, were interested in blurring these lines through LPAs, and pushed to make them part of the original project plan.

If the overarching goal was to bring diverse stakeholders together to work collaboratively, the main challenge was implementing this diverse engagement.

RiPPLE decided the best approach would be to work its way up from the woreda (district) and sub-national regional levels. More recently they have turned to facilitating learning across the LPAs, horizontally, vertically and 'diagonally', at the national level. They have also established a virtual LPA for the greater Nile River Basin region. There are currently three woreda and six regional LPAs, whose activities focus around shared experience and understanding of what the problems are in water and sanitation at each of these levels. By discussing and refining issues, they can then decide together what the research focus should be. In terms of implementation and sustainability, each LPA has a coordinator who is in charge of sustaining interest and managing LPA activities. In order to this, the focus in 2008 has been on longer-term action research projects (LARs).

Although establishing these LPAs hasn't necessarily been easy, there is a growing recognition that they're doing something worthwhile. They have been quite effective as a device for working across the research–practice interface and for helping foster understanding among disparate stakeholders. It has proved particularly successful when there is a limited research budget, as it's a way of narrowing down and focusing through institutions and teamwork. They have also helped to improve the coordination, discussion and debate of service delivery issues. At the national level, the Ministry of Water leads the national LPA, FIOWS. This buy-in from the government has helped raise the profile and the effectiveness of the overall LPA initiatives. Although there have been some initial successes, since the project is only in the second of its five-year duration, it is difficult to gauge the ultimate impact of these initiatives, especially since they take a significant amount of time to establish.

This buy-in didn't evolve organically: it took a lot of planning and hard work to generate interest, identify partners and support participants who are not necessarily trained researchers. For the latter, it's important not to have mentors 'breathing down the neck' of these researchers, but rather supporting and guiding them, particularly with data analysis and interpretation. But it's often a difficult balance to strike. It's also often difficult to navigate around the diverse agenda and special interests that the diverse participants bring to the table.

The 10% for communications rule from DFID has helped the LPAs think about how they are using communications. Good communications between and among LPAs has been essential in generating shared understanding, ownership and sustainability of outcomes. As the LPAs have developed, this means that communications is becoming integral to research, not just in terms of uptake and dissemination, but as a support to and part of the action of research. Thinking about communications from the beginning of a project has also been a helpful motivating factor: if LPA participants understand what's going to happen to the results, it's a lot easier to get them interested in researching. At the same time, pinning down what constitutes 'communication', and therefore as falling under the 10% rule, has been difficult. Including staff time to support communication, for example, quickly eats up this budget, so RiPPLE has committed the 10% to producing outputs and finding additional money for communications staff.

There is a question of how sustainable these LPAs are beyond the lifespan of RiPPLE, especially since it is clear that each LPA needs a full-time coordinator. But RiPPLE has already started exploring alternative funding opportunities by shifting focus to a local Ethiopian NGO – Hararge Catholic Secretariat (HCS), one of the stronger local NGOs in agricultural marketing and extension. The hope

is that this partnership will help sustain the LPAs, as they want to help scale up the initiative across the rest of Ethiopia through their umbrella organisation.

Additional information about how these LPAs are structured and what they are working on is available on the RiPPLE website at http://www.rippleethiopia.org/page/learning-and-practice-alliances.

Centre for the Future State: Linking good taxation to good governance

"We believe that taxation is essential to sustainable development. Developed and developing economies, NGOs, private investors and international organisations should work together to promote fair and efficient tax s ystems and administrations that will ensure each country receives the fruits of its own economic achievement and, at the same time, improves its overall governance."

– Pretoria Communiqué

At the end of August 2008, representatives of tax authorities from 29 African countries signed a joint communiqué affirming their commitment to tax systems as a facilitator of sustainable development. This argument parallels and reflects work by Future State DRC on the links between taxation, good tax policy and good governance in developing countries. The DRC Director was present at the Pretoria meeting as the only non-official representative.

There is a large literature from European history that suggests a strong association between taxation systems and governance approaches, but, for various reasons, little of this thinking had been translated to developing contexts before 2000. Filling that research gap was the first step in gaining wider acceptance of the idea. The Future State have also exerted much effort communicating the idea among academics and policy makers. The recent communiqué can be seen as a significant step in this process.

There were two main challenges facing Future State in gaining wider traction for this idea: finding research that definitively demonstrated the case and presenting the research in a way that would draw interest.

Fostering a sense of community among researchers interested in the issue through meetings and conferences was one way Future state was able to focus the research agenda. The DRC drove the research process by undertaking some of the research itself, but also by using DRC resources to network and produce joint publications with other researchers who were not members of the research consortium.

Finding a wider audience for the research was more challenging, especially given the specialised nature of the subject. The DRC pursued an opportunistic strategy that was supported by several key publications. After five years of negotiation, drafting and editing, a book linking tax policy to good governance was published by a one of the most prestigious academic publishers. This drew a wider range of researchers to the issue. But on the policy side, it was the more condensed outputs that helped garner attention, notably a discussion paper that was subsequently republished in the leading professional journal for tax administrators. Future State researchers also made a point of presenting their arguments at a variety of events.

Beyond the Pretoria communiqué, these efforts have also resulted in a range of other outcomes. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Commission (OECD-DAC) has commissioned consortium members to help produce policy papers on the issue. The 2006 white paper by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) incorporated some of these ideas. Members of the consortium have also been invited to teach on training courses for Commonwealth tax officials and to be guest speakers at the annual conference of the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria.

Many of these successes can be attributed to the wide range of researchers who coalesced around the topic. Future State provided more opportunities for academic debate than existed before. Having a few 'issue champions' has certainly raised the profile of the issue in both academic and policy circles. Another important aspect of finding a broader audience was writing in a clear and straight-forward manner. This is essential in all policy engagement, but was particularly true in this case, which often involved highly technical discussions. Writing clearly was a main area of support provided by the consortium members.

The 10-year programme is starting to wind down and is shifting its efforts from a focus on research to a greater emphasis on communication activities. The Pretoria communiqué may be an important step in recognising the link between taxes and governance, but moving beyond words to practice remains a significant hurdle.

DFID's recommendation to spend a minimum of 10% of research consortium budgets on communication activities did not directly impact on this set of research activities or the Future State DRC more generally: it was always clear that it made sense to spend more. The 10% minimum rule might be relevant to 'ivory tower academics', but that was not the situation with this programme.

More information on this initiative can be found on the Future State website at: http://www2.ids.ac.uk/futurestate/general/taxation.html

COMDIS: Realigning Chinese Tuberculosis policy and practice

Since 2000, members of the COMDIS Research Programme Consortium (RPC) have worked closely with the Chinese government to revise, adapt and rollout guidelines and training for doctors managing tuberculosis (TB) treatments. TB can be a curable disease if suffers carefully follow a course of antibiotics over a six-month period, but a major difficulty is ensuring that the treatment regimen is strictly followed. In China, the previous guidelines for doctors recommended that medical staff directly observe patients taking the drugs for the duration of the treatment. Especially in rural settings, this put a large burden on patients, their families and the medical practitioners. And the burden had a significant impact on treatment; COMDIS found that only five percent of rural TB patients were actually observed by doctors for the full course of antibiotics. This carried a serious risk of failed treatment.

Backed by research carried out in Nepal, Pakistan and Swaziland, and ultimately supported when the World Health Organization (WHO) amended its TB guidelines in 2006, COMDIS recommended that a trained family member observe and ensure the treatment.

Ultimately, the challenge was to change the less-than-ideal behaviours of doctors, TB patients and their families to increase chances of successful treatment. This was important not only in terms of preventing unnecessary patient fatalities, but also in preventing the spread of potentially drug-resistant strains of the disease. But behaviour change is difficult at the best of times and is nearly impossible in China without the backing of the government. Therefore, COMDIS focused its strategy on adapting the national TB guidelines.

Influencing the guidelines has been a long process of engagement with the Chinese government, who started considering their revision in 2000, before this iteration of COMDIS even existed. Members of the COMDIS team had worked in the Chinese Ministry of Health and recognised the need to engage nationally first, even if the ultimate targets were doctors practicing in more rural, inland provinces. Working with the China National TB Programme (NTP), the Chinese Centres for Disease Control (CDC) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) was essential to gaining access at the provincial level.

Based on international recommendations and guidelines, pilot and control projects were established in Shandong and Guangxi provinces and were followed for about one year. During this time, the desk guide was translated into Chinese and adapted based on in-depth interviews of doctors, patients and their family members regarding the treatment process. This research became key evidence to show national policy-makers that the guide was useful for the inland doctors. Beyond the guidelines, COMDIS made sure to develop 'the whole package' of everything from background theory documents to practical training material. The idea was to work within the existing system as a way to capitalise on existing training infrastructure.

The training programme has been scaled up and implemented in Guangxi, and they are in the process of doing the same in Shandong. As the focus was on national policy, the guidelines are slowly being rolled out across the country to train all Chinese TB doctors.

One of the key lessons to emerge from this process was the need to be systematic and coordinated in approach. This meant not only a strong research design, but a clear plan on how to navigate the politics around the topic. On the ground, this meant working closely with leaders, medical practitioners and patients to learn from their needs and adapt the guidance appropriately. And in terms of policy influence, deciding to work within the existing system gave the project moment that it might not have had otherwise. To do this, COMDIS had to work at a national level to get agreement to intervene at the provincial level. This was an important decision based on a clear understanding of national political context: policy in China is set from the top down and implemented from the bottom up. It also helped that consortium members had connections to some of the key leaders at the national and provincial levels and had fostered this engagement and cooperation over many years.

The success of this project was based on a large number of actors who have a broad skill set. The project required technical medical knowledge, but that is just the beginning. Having capable translators (of knowledge, not just language) played an important role in adapting the guidelines. Having good negotiation skills was also required to engage with policy makers. And clear leadership was important to keep the project alive during the long process of engagement. The difficulty became the coordination of all of these efforts.

Going forward, COMDIS is helping to scale up the project nationally and are continuing to engage with the NTP on TB policy. In other countries, Bangladesh is interested in adapting the guidelines into their system and Nepal has already done this and roll out is in its initial phases. This process has also been introduced in Swaziland and Uganda.

DFID's stress on a 10% spend on communications was somewhat difficult for the programme to initially understand. They had characterised its work as 'operational research' from the beginning. By this, they mean that it was research with the direct intention of working with the appropriate government institutions and local actors to update the guidelines; it was not undertaken to simply highlight the low rate of direct observation of TB patients by doctors. When DFID suggested that communication was more than about publications, this 10% spend began to make more sense. In talks with Chinese officials, one expressed a concern that research rarely answered the question for policy makers of what to do next, so COMDIS made sure to have clear policy recommendations as part of their research.

More information on this project can be found in the 'China Projects' section on the COMDIS website. A brochure published by the Chinese National TB Programme and the CDC in November 2006 about the guidelines is currently under revision and should be available online shortly.

CREATE: Thinking beyond enrolment in Ghana's Ministry of Education

Over the past several years, CREATE has worked with local Ghanaian researchers, universities and policy-makers to increase the use of local research in the policy dialogue. This was part of a more specific attempt to shift policy discourse of the ministry from a focus on gross enrolment figures to thinking about the underlying factors that affect them. In previous instances, researcher participation in the policy process had been very weak, so CREATE has really provided the opportunity for closer dialogue and enriched the policy debate. This increased participation revolved around three senior stakeholders: the Chief Director from the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS), the Minister of Education and the lead Ghanaian partner from CREATE, Professor Djangmah, the former director general of the Ghana Education Service.

Previously, the debate on educational access in Ghana was led by MOESS through its annual reviews of education. Usually the ministry would invite international consultants to look at the data and information provided by the Education Management System and to help analyse the data and shape the agenda. Historically however, this process hadn't sufficiently reflected local context – analysis was strongly influenced by an international perspective and Ghanaian researchers played a limited role.

CREATE sought to tackle this disconnect by ensuring stronger linkages with in-country research on education. In particular, CREATE's research has emphasised the patterns of participation over the education cycle to move the agenda beyond discussions of gross enrolment figures and the influence these factors have on accessing education.

In order to influence this policy dialogue, the first action taken was the establishment of a national reference group consisting of the three RPC in Ghana that look at quality, access and outcome, with the Chief Director for MOESS as the chair. Directors from the ministry also participated in these meetings. This group allowed for dialogue between researchers and policy-makers – while researchers were making suggestions, policy-makers also gave input into research findings and directions. All of the reports, for example, were sent to key stakeholders so they could review the evidence and make sure that the messages reflected the problems from the ministry's perspective and the policy direction. Outside of this working group, CREATE has also given presentations to Ghana's parliament on educational issues highlighted by their research.

The serious engagement with policy-makers has led to two significant changes both in terms of policy and in terms of operation. First, the policy dialogue now recognises the importance of age as a factor affecting enrolment. Also, field work is beginning to show that, in some of the poor areas in Ghana, there is an interest in private schooling. It is counterintuitive that rural poor could afford this private education, so convincing the ministry that they need to look at this aspect has been another way CREATE has input into the policy-making process.

Secondly, the ministry has given strong support for increasing its own capacity to understand and incorporate research. The Chief Director is currently a student at the University of Sussex (where the RPC is based), and he has helped five of his directors to enrol on a professional doctorate programme there. Beyond the $250,000 the ministry has committed to its internal capacity development, it is also supporting the establishment of a research centre on basic education at the University of Education at Winneba. The idea is for this centre to engage in research that reflects issues on basic education policy and practice in Ghana. Two researchers from the University of Winneba are currently studying for their doctorates at Sussex under the CREATE programme and will be returning to strengthen this new centre in Winneba.

In terms of influencing policy, it was recognised that to get research into policy, maintaining dialogue is essential, and it has become a key strategy. CREATE has established a series of two-page policy briefs to help open the discussion, and having a national reference group is also an important way to keep the dialogue going both ways.

It is clear that none of this would have been possible without a receptive ministry, and in particular the Chief Director. This has been highly effective in giving the project momentum, but there are risks with relying too heavily on a single stakeholder. If a significant part of the funding and progress hinges on a single director, what happens if he changes jobs? The capacity development of other staff at the ministry is central to sustaining locally informed and developed research, but will this be enough? The Chief Director recognises this challenge and hence his commitment to send five of his senior officials at the Ministry to train at Sussex. He has already moved some of them into key leadership positions

and handed over some of his responsibilities to ensure there is smooth transition into a new leadership team when he eventually leaves the ministry. According to him, giving these officials the opportunity to upgrade and improve their understanding of research and how it is used in policy will ensure that the Ministry continues to make research evidence a key part of the policy making process to improve educational quality and access.

During CREATE's last visit to Ghana, they realised that spending 10% on communications is actually very little, especially considering the amount of funding the ministry has dedicated to the project. As more research happens, more communication support is needed, especially as momentum is gathered. They've done policy briefs, met in a national reference group, had several special features in a national newspaper and participated in media interviews.

Further information on this project can be found on the CREATE website, where programme policy briefs have been compiled. See specifically the Access, age and grade policy brief and the Ghanaian overview.

EfA: Getting HIV status in the Malawian 'health passport'

Evidence for Action (EfA) has been working closely with the Malawian government to standardise the documentation of HIV status in the government's 'health passport'.

In 2001, the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Malawi introduced standardised patient health records known as health passports. They were available for a nominal fee, and collected information on immunisation, health history and maternity records, among other basic information. Prior to 2006, the passport did not track HIV status, which is essential knowledge for health workers when trying to prevent mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of the disease. Mother-to-child transmission is responsible for nearly one third of all new cases of HIV in Malawi, making its prevention a key priority in tackling the epidemic there. After the addition of a question on HIV status in 2006, different ways of encoding the information flourished, resulting in 57 permutations and instances where a given score meant HIV negative in some places and HIV positive in others. EfA made the case for documenting HIV status in 2006 and continued its work with the MoH to standardise how it was recorded.

The main challenge facing EfA was the decentralised nature of HIV testing in Malawi (there were more than 400 testing facilities in 2007, for example) and lack of standards for communicating HIV test outcomes.

After being commissioned by the MoH to undertake research, EfA partners have been involved in annual surveys of HIV prevalence and response in Malawi since 2003. They have been in charge of the survey since 2007 with a specific view to collect data on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems like the health passport. The goal was to collect high-quality, representative and complete data on the state of HIV and its prevention and treatment in Malawi. Since this is effectively the national reference document on HIV in Malawi, it is read by many of the key stakeholders. However, in order to further the discussion on recording data on HIV status in the passports in a standardised way, EfA had to work to draw attention to specific chapters of the report that dealt with M&E systems and the lack of scaling up of PMTCT services. One of the most effective ways of doing that was to raise these issues at the quarterly HIV sector forums in which they participated, where policy-makers were able to most clearly see the implications.

This continuing discussion has led to two major changes. First, there has been a major shift in the way that HIV testing should be done. In 2005, Malawi still had an anonymous HIV testing paradigm – HIV test results had never been given out in any named document. Implementing a system where HIV status is documented with the patient name, date and provider has therefore been hugely significant. The other key success has been EfA's support to designing a standard page in the health passport that includes the information above as well as they type of anti-retroviral (ARV) treatment and the HIV status of a pregnant mother's child.

Several important lessons emerge from these successes. One of the main success factors has been that the MoH was leading the process. The ministry recognised the need for the research and commissioned EfA partners to do it. EfA had invested in close working relationships with the ministry, but the key has been keeping research demand-driven. In terms of carrying out the research, working with multiple partners helped the credibility of the report. The research was undertaken by more than 10 partner agencies. This helped more researchers to understand better the situation on the ground and encouraged their further participation in the policy process.

As with many other cases, these successes have also been achieved through a long consultation and engagement process. Involving many partners and different policy makers from the ministry gave it broader support but made progress slow. This required significant support from the EfA partners – everything from helping arrange meetings, to lobbying before meetings, to keeping meetings on topic. Improving these monitoring systems has been part of a broader process to improve the communication of HIV management for pregnant women and their children in Malawi and EfA is working to support other elements of this process.

The role of DFID's recommend spend of 10% of the programme budget on communications is unclear in this case, but the strong guidance to focus on communication was certainly helpful. EfA partners in Malawi have a strong history of engaging with partners, so the 10% was good support, but not necessarily a huge change in practice.

For more information see http://www.evidence4action.org/content/view/41/50/.

ABBA: Standardising support for vulnerable children in Amangwe village, South Africa

One important strand of work that ABBA undertakes is looking at the social, economic and institutional factors that can lead to an increase in HIV/AIDS rates across Africa. To that end, one of the first projects completed was a study in Amangwe village in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, on support given to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Amangwe is not a village in the traditio nal sense, but rather was set up by the busin esses operating in the area (particularly a paper-manufacturing company, a mining company and a coal terminal). The buildings that comprise the village were structures from a former logging camp.

Support to OVC started in the village with a crèche facility. They provide a wide array of services, including an on-site library, access to health and nutrition, and, through contacts with the education and social services, are trying to support educational access. They also do community outreach, training and education on HIV/AIDS issues – both through education programmes for teachers and peer-to-peer HIV education for local teens – home-based carers and they have a programme of support for local villages on policies and training programmes.

But beyond this facility, there are over 30 OVC programmes in the area. A previous study had found a serious unevenness of services, both geographically and in terms of what these programmes could actually provide. The study identified some specific areas where the programmes could more effectively address the needs of children: children-to-staff ratio (some were as high as 90 children per member of staff and were only able to provide the most basic of services), improved documentation and management systems (few systematically checked on individual children's progress on various development indicators) and improving health and safety standards (some didn't even have a first aid kit).

Building on this study, ABBA focused on the documentation issue, the main challenge being to create a more standard tool that could, and would, be adapted and adopted by each of the OVC programmes in the community. Although there are existing regulations, meeting them can require significant funding for the programmes – funding that they do not qualify for if they fail meet the regulations, causing a 'chicken and egg' problem. It was, therefore, important that these guidelines be demand-driven and not perceived as an operating burden by the programmes.

The process started with a research project that built upon the Child Status Index, piloting and adapting these standards so they made more sense to those involved in seven of the OVC programmes. But the research was just the beginning—the findings were presented to the village through a stakeholder meeting to initiate a dialogue between the researchers and the community on how these recording mechanisms could best be adopted and implemented. It was also part of the local weekly newspaper (Zulu Land Observer), and as the village has a close relationship with the paper, this became another important feedback mechanism. Private industry supports the village financially, and getting buy-in from them was also important. Having the manager of the village for the industries, Aaliya Fransch, as a driving force for the project was essential.

In the end, the norms and standards were adopted by the village, and are being taken up by other OVC programmes in the uThungulu District. ABBA is undertaking similar research in Ghana and Malawi, and hopes to apply lessons from this pilot initiative there.

This research project was successful largely because the process was strongly driven by the community. The lack of standards across these facilities was a concern for many, and the research became an opportunity for the community to tackle the issue. Also, the way the researchers approached the OVC programmes was essential. Rather than telling these programmes to implement standards, they posed the question of whether the programmes had guidelines. Asking the programmes to demonstrate the development of children in their care was a key driver of change. These questions encouraged thinking about standards and helped keep the process demand-driven. Also, having the ultimate beneficiaries participate in modifying and adapting the standards made them more likely to be taken up.

This is not the first project in Amangwe village that the same researchers had been involved in. Developing long-term relationships with key players in the community was essential not only to the success of the project but also to access to the village. As one of the community leaders said, 'I can spend all week talking to researchers'. Being 'over-researched' can be its own burden on the community, both in terms of stigma and in terms of sorting through contradictory findings and

recommendations. Coordinating ABBA's work with other research groups in the area was also essential.

The requirement by DFID to spend 10% of funds on communications activities was unclear in this case, but the project likely spent more than the required minimum. It has helped push researchers in this programme to 'think outside the box' in terms of communications activities. For example, some of the most influential meetings that were had in these projects were simply talking over a beer. They are also considering follow up with a video diary documenting the research process. There is also a clear sense in this project that communication is a two-way street.

Further information on this project can be found in the project area of the ABBA website, and the report "A descriptive study of programmes for orphans and vulnerable children in uThulungu district, South Africa" see Programme Reports # 1" is available on request.

Young Lives: Integrating child-focused policy across departments in Andhra Pradesh, India

In 2006, Young Lives was invited by the state of Andhra Pradesh, India, to help develop a state-level plan of action for children as part of a national policy initiative. Based on their research, they were able to ensure that children were viewed as social actors in their own right and were taken into consideration across departments. Young Lives has been in existence for fifteen years, tracking the same children as they develop. This extended duration of the programme has allowed for Young Lives to establish close working relationships with key stakeholders around the world, and the invitation to help develop this policy was a culmination of years of cooperation with the Department for Women and Children in Andhra Pradesh. The research process is time intensive – involving interviewing, transcription, translation, cleaning and analysis – so fostering these relationships has been central to providing policy-relevant information when it is in demand.

The most recent research cycle started in 2002, with a follow up survey undertaken in 2006. Drafting the plan of action for children also began in 2006, so the recommendations were founded mainly in the first round of research.

Nevertheless, research suggested that it was important to think comprehensively about children. Previous approaches tended to think about children in silos: children and education, children and health, child labour or children and maternal health, for example. The challenge became drafting a policy to get children on the agenda across departments (i.e. making sure health was linking with education) and thinking about the impact of budgeting on children in terms of livelihood issues, especially since this was the first time many departments had to directly consider children in their respective policies and budgets.

Working in collaboration with the Christian Children's Fund, even though they were not members of the RPC, Young Lives organised a number of meetings with government, but also with the non-governmental sector in order to think through what was needed in the charter. This involved extensive networking with other NGOs and alliance building to help draft and comment on drafts of the policy. Young Lives has both research and policy teams, and the document was mainly done by the policy coordinator with wider consultation drawn from the broader network.

After extensive consultation and several drafts, the policy, and a monitoring plan for its implementation, were approved by the government and launched with press coverage. The week before the launch, however, the minister who had been preparing the documents was moved to another job, and shortly after the launch there were staffing changes within Young Lives. There was concern, therefore, about the ability of the implementation and the monitoring of the policy to succeed, but so far activities have been carried out mostly as planned.

This experience highlighted the role of the minister as a central driver of the process, and the importance of maintaining strong relationships with key stakeholders. But it just as equally underlined the risks of political work – that key people can suddenly get shifted into a different role. It is important to consider whether power lies with the person or the position when cultivating relationships.

One other aspect of this policy development that worked particularly well was the communication activities that were organised by the government department. The launch was a high-level event and engendered considerable media interest. Without close work with the department, such coverage would have been difficult to achieve. At the same time, it was felt that the response from the other government departments was mixed. Working with a wider range of stakeholders across the government departments might have increased the buy-in from these other departments.

This experience has made future work in Andhra Pradesh much easier as Young Lives is now considered to be an important player in national and state-level debates and discussion on children, both within government and in the non-governmental sector. Uptake is never automatic, but based on this higher visibility, facilitators have been able to feed Young Lives research to other NGOs and generate more interest among the other actors.

Policy influencing was built into the original logframe of the RPC, so DFID's guidelines on spending 10% on communications was more-or-less redundant – there was already a significant budget for communications. DFID's emphasis on communication has helped support Young Lives communications work across the research and policy teams.

For further information see: http://www.younglives.org.uk/countries/india/index_html.

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Annex 6: Presentation to the Research communication Workshop, 22 July 2008

Slide 1

Review of Communications in DFID-funded Research Programme Consortia (RPCs)

DFID Research Communications Meeting
22nd July 2008

John Young (j.young@odi.org.uk)
ODI, London

Slide 2

DFID RPCs

- DFID currently funds 30 Research Programme Consortia
- Introduced a 10% minimum spend on communications
- Each RPC required to produce a strategy demonstrating how research would be put into use
- DFID provided a series of support mechanisms to enable this

Slide 3

RAPID Review

Key questions

1. How effective is this policy?
2. What has it achieved – is there evidence?
3. What are the challenges in implementing the communication cycle?
4. How can DFID continue to support research uptake?
5. How can DFID demonstrate impact – an M&E system

Slide 4

RAPID Review

Methodology

1. Review of RPC documents
2. Interviews with RPC directors and COs
3. Review of comparators and "state of knowledge"
4. Workshop with DFID staff and selected others

Slide 5

Outputs

- ✓ Wide range of written outputs and meetings
- ✓ Clearly policy-oriented
- Few uses of popular media and stories
- Little investments in building networks

Slide 6

Processes and Structure

- ✓ Stakeholder consultations often lead to national advisory groups
- ✓ Most have dedicated communications post & communications working group
- ✓ Average spend is higher than 10%
- Organisational tension between researchers and comms staff

Slide 7

Monitoring & Evaluation

- ✓ RPCs have followed DFID requirements (Log-Frame)
- Little knowledge of appropriate M&E methods
- Little differentiation between quality of outputs, uptake and impact
- Little knowledge of how to monitor and evaluate partnerships and networks

Slide 8

Working Practices

- ✓ RPCs are seeking opportunities for policy engagement – stakeholder workshops
- ✓ Research is more demand driven, more applied, more multi-disciplinary and more open access
- ✓ More links between RPCs
- ✓ More multiplier funding being sought
- Serious reflection on North-South partnerships, but still a big challenge
- Incentives for the above are not clear

Capacity Strengthening

✓ Good opportunities for strengthening individual research and communication skills
- Some strengthening of southern capacity for research leadership but little discussion of the challenges
- Same for South-South exchange and collaboration
- RPCs reflecting as best they can on complexities of partnership and funding
- Little discussion of how to sustain capacity after the life of the RPC

Slide 9

Summary

- Best understood part of research communication cycle is **Stakeholder involvement**
  - Inception meetings, advisory groups, relationship building activities
  - Enabled higher quality involvement in policy processes
- Least understood part is **M&E**
  - How can we review the impact pathways we are creating?

Slide 10

Next steps

- Identify changes in behaviour among RPCs and reasons
  - Individual events
  - Longer term changes
- Explore cases of claimed impact and reasons
- Comparison with pre-10% rule research programmes
- Strategy for further improvement and M&E system

Slide 11

Some examples

New practices:
- Stakeholder meetings (Crisis States)
- Building alliances (CPRC)

Impact:
- Increased attention to population issues in UK Parliament (Realising rights)
- China approach to TB control (COMDIS)

Slide 12

Stories of change

1. What is the story about?
2. Is there any other important background information?
3. What was the existing behaviour?
4. What did the RPC do that contributed to the behaviour change?
5. What was the behaviour change?
6. What factors helped make this change successful?
7. What comes next for the key actors?
8. Where can we find more information or supporting evidence?

Slide 13

Group work

- Share experiences of approaches to research communication
- Explore successes and challenges
- Identify suppport needed for more effective work
- (feedback on ODI's proposal for next steps)

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Annex 7: List of participants in the focus group discussions

These are the dates and participants of the focus group discussions that provided the data for chapter 6:

LSHTM, 8 Oct 2008

- Rebecca Wolfe: Communications officer for CREHS and Towards 4+5

- Nicola Lord: CREHS manager

- Kara Hanson: CREHS director

- Annabelle South: Communications Manager for EfA

- Tamsin Kelk: Communications officer for SRH & HIV, and also works for the Health Policy and Planning journal

IDS, 14 Oct 2008

- Joanna Wheeler: In IDS 5 years. Research Manager of Citizenship DRC.

- John Gaventa: In IDS 12 years. Head of Participation Group. Director of Citizenship DRC.

- Fiona Wilson: In IDS 69-71, then on Fellows Review Panel

UCT, 10 Oct 2008

- Alan Flisher: Director, Mental Health and Poverty Project, University of Cape Town
- Haroon Bhorat: Professor of Economics, University of Cape Town

Annex 8: A Recommended Approach to Research Communication M&E

On 15 September 2008, a workshop was held at DFID to focus on how to broaden the guidelines and support given to RPC regarding M&E. The work at the workshop resulted in a preliminary wiki (http://rpcmande.wik.is/).

The wiki is designed to help policy research programmes think through the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process of their policy engagement more strategically. **Chapter 1** of the wiki provides an introduction. **Chapter 2** starts with a review of basic principles of M&E with a particular focus on challenges faced by RPC and other policy research programmes. **Chapter 3** outlines tools (with clear examples) that all RPC should be employing (both required by DFID and also those that are highly recommended). **Chapter 4** highlights more specialised tools that can be used to monitor and evaluate specific aspects of the policy engagement agenda. **Chapter 5** addresses the support structure on M&E for RPC, and **chapter 6** will provide links to additional information and resources.

Chapter 1: Introduction and rationale

Key findings from a review of RPC' M&E systems

A review of RPC' M&E systems suggests that:
- RPC are overall very good at monitoring **the logical aspect of their strategy** (through logframes) and **the quality of their research** (through peer review).

- They are overall fairly good at monitoring **programme management** (through Annual Reports to DFID) and **the quantitative amount of uptake** (also through Annual Reports).

- They are overall fairly good at evaluating **the quality of their wider range of outputs** (through the assessment of the Communications Officer); though this is rarely given explicit attention in the Annual Reports.

- They are overall less good at monitoring their **progress along impact pathways**, i.e. monitoring whether their current work is likely to achieve impact in the future. Instead they tend to report on any individual impacts that have been achieved in the past year (which is also important, but does not necessarily evaluate how the impact was achieved and whether the programme can achieve similar impacts in the future).

- The RPC are overall not so good at monitoring **the quality of their relationships**, or where and how relationships need to be improved, e.g. through engagement, alliances, networks, etc. Instead they tend to report on the quantitative nature of their relationships (e.g. the number of meetings with policymakers, etc).

- In general, there seems to be a gap between the regular reporting that takes place within the RPC, e.g. quarterly, and **higher-level reflection** around policy impact. This difficulty is pointed at by several RPC. As a result, most RPC resolve to leave the higher-level learning around policy impact to mid-term reviews and end-of-programme reviews, when external reviewers have time to conduct interviews, review policy documentation, and so on.

Key question

Why have RPC taken up more of DFID's recommendations on communication activitiess than they have on Monitoring and Evaluation? And why have they made less progress on M&E systems?

Approach to this toolkit

In order to answer this question, this toolkit starts by considering what RPC are asked to do and what they find challenging in relation to M&E of research-policy programmes.

The fact that this list of challenges were so prominent nearly a year after the publication of the guidelines suggests that they are not entirely relevant to the reality of research-policy programmes. That they still resonate in 2008 also offers an explanation for less developed M&E systems among the RPC today.

This somewhat inconsistent relationship between the guidelines and the experiences from the RPC suggests the need to review:

- Core principles or guidelines for the development of monitoring and evaluation (and learning) systems
- Necessary tools that all RPC M&E frameworks should include
- More specialised tools that are useful is different contexts and for different purposes
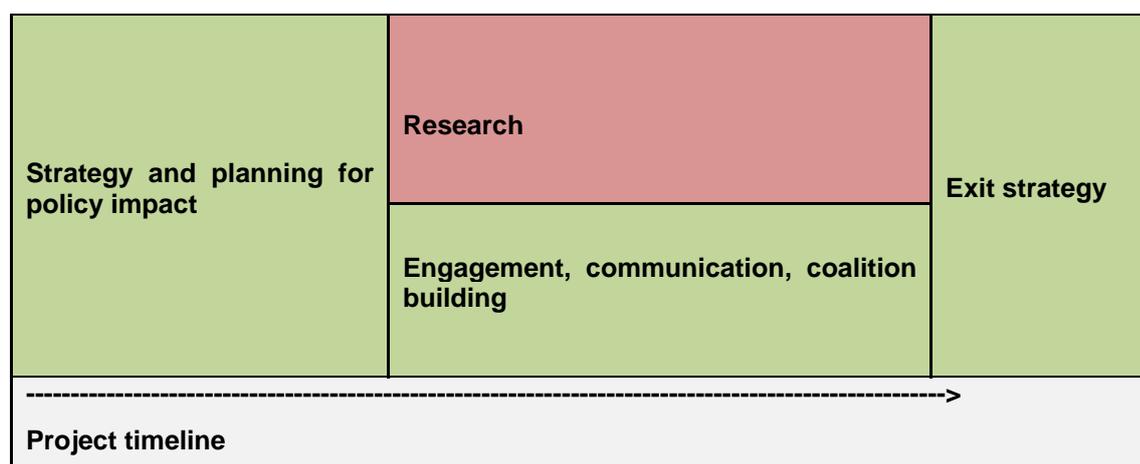
Chapter 2: Principles and guidelines for M&E

Principles of M&E for research policy programmes

These principles of M&E provide a basis that any project interested in research communication should consider. They take into account that research communication activities are inter-connected with all other parts of the research policy programme like an RPC and, therefore, M&E recommendations overlap with research and management M&E. See the section 'What are we monitoring?' below for a more thorough discussion of this topic.

- **Different M&E tools for different RPC strategies and objectives:** RPC' M&E tools need to respond to their research communication/influencing strategies and policy objectives. For instance, not all RPC are targeting national-level policy-makers; some are aiming their activities to knowledge intermediaries such as policy analysts, advisors or even broader policy spaces. Similarly, not all RPC aim to change specific policy documents; some are attempting to shape discourses or adapt processes.

- **The problem with attribution:** M&E frameworks should recognise that RPC are only one of many other actors attempting to bring about research-based policy changes. Similarly, policy objectives and development impacts often happen a long time after the RPC interventions have taken place, making it difficult to attribute change to any one actor. Instead, RPC should focus in assessing their contribution to change.

- **Monitoring of networks (or partnerships):** A significant element of all RPC is the development of a research partnership between organisations from different countries; often from different regions. M&E frameworks of RPC should consider ways of monitoring progress in the development of a strong partnership or network between the RPC partners.

- **Accountability:** One important role of M&E is to assure those to whom a project is responsible (whether it be donors, other government ministries or the general public) that the project is on track and worthy of continued investment. This accountability can be either financial (are the funds spent the right way?) or procedural (did the programme do what it intended to do?) in nature.

- **Continuous learning:** While many of the recommendations from donors respond to accountability concerns, long term research-policy programmes need to find a balance between accountability and learning. M&E frameworks for RPC should be oriented towards the identification of lessons useful for the programmes themselves. Monitoring information should provide managers, researchers and communicators with the information they need to make strategic decisions. Learning should take place before, during and after a programme or project.

- **M&E for all:** As learning is an essential aspect of M&E, it is a process that requires the participation of all members within a consortium. The responsibilities for each member might vary, and it may be helpful to have one position dedicated to gathering and synthesising M&E information, but a system should be established at the outset that allows for easy participation by all.

- **Process is as important as product:** M&E is not only about monitoring the uptake of a specific output (e.g. through webstats, citation analysis, etc.) or measuring against the desired policy impact. Indeed, as highlighted below, it is unlikely that work from these research programmes will lead to an immediate policy impact. Therefore, process should play just as important a role in M&E. This aspect will highlight lessons learnt, but can also provide good justification for why certain decisions were made, especially when significant diversions from the original strategy are taken.

- **Upstream versus downstream changes:** RPC work is unlikely to lead to immediate development impacts. However, their interventions will have effects among those they work directly with. These upstream policy changes should be the focus of RPC M&E frameworks.

- **Clarity of intent:** It is difficult to monitor or evaluate progress towards a strategy without a) having a decent understanding of the initial context and b) having a clear plan of action. Taking the time to get these fundamentals right during the implementation phase will make the M&E, and indeed the entire programme, more practicable.

What are we monitoring?

Strategy and planning for policy impact	Research	Exit strategy
	Engagement, communication, coalition building	
-->		
Project timeline		

When research programmes aim for policy impact, it is sometimes difficult to separate monitoring and evaluation of the programme as a whole from monitoring for policy impact. Research can be seen as a tool for policy impact, especially as studies suggest that research designed with the participation of policy-makers and other stakeholders is more likely to get taken up. Appropriate M&E and quality control of research methods and content should be developed and employed during the lifecycle of a project, but this is outside the scope of this toolkit. Rather, the tools suggested in the following sections focus mainly on the M&E of strategic communications – that is to say the initial strategic planning phase; the engagement, communication and coalition building phase (which often occurs at the same time as the research phase); and the formulation of an exit strategy.

Areas of coverage of M&E for RPC

As a starting point we suggest that M&E of a policy research programme needs to cover the following five broad areas (Hovland 2007, ODI Working Paper 281):

1. **Strategy and direction:** The basic plan that the research programme is following;

2. **Management:** The systems, processes and competencies that the programme has in place in order to ensure that the overall strategy is carried out;

3. **The quality of the outputs:** The tangible goods and services that a research programme produces (e.g. journal articles, policy briefs, website, meetings, events, networks, etc);

4. **Uptake:** Direct responses to the research programme (e.g. its research is mentioned in a government policy paper, on a range of websites, referred to in a newspaper article, etc);

5. **Outcomes/impacts:** Changes in behaviour, knowledge, policies, capacities and/or practices that the research has contributed to, directly or indirectly (e.g. a change in government policy implementation, a change in working practices among NGO practitioners, a reduction of poverty in a certain area, strengthened livelihoods, strengthened civil society input into policy processes, etc).

Chapter 3: Necessary tools all RPC M&E Frameworks should include

The following table shows some M&E approaches and tools which have been systematically used by the majority of RPC (as well as other suggested tools) and the kind of results/impact which these approaches can successfully track. It also includes other necessary tools. These are general tools that all RPC should use.

Required tools

M&E tool	Short description including examples	Can successfully track	Comments	Monitoring or Evaluation	Learning or Accountability
Logframes	A comprehensive tool used by DFID to help think strategically through a project cycle. Example from Realising Rights and Future Health Systems	Can successfully track whether programme activities relate logically to the overall goal (i.e. *what* is the programme doing). They can also successfully track the (quantitative) amount of uptake.	Less clear at tracking the social aspect of the strategy (i.e. *who* is the programme engaging with / not engaging with).	Monitoring and evaluation	Learning and accountability
Annual reports to DFID (see Annex 3)		Can successfully track progress against the logframe, which shows quantitative amounts of outputs and uptake. Indirectly this can also successfully track the quality of the programme's management. The reports also act as 'impact files' where any significant impacts over the past year are recorded.		Evaluation	Accountability

Stories of change	EfA is monitoring progress against the milestones identified in the Stories of Change for priority stakeholders	Can successfully provide qualitative assessment of changes and the processes that led to these change	Usually Stories of Change are documented after the fact, but Stories of Change can also be written up as future scenarios that the programme aims to achieve (progress is then monitored against the envisioned scenario)	Monitoring end evaluation	Learning
Communication Strategies				Monitoring and Evaluation	
Academic peer review		Can successfully track the quality of the programme's written academic outputs. Peer review tracks the quality of the programme's research methods and the robustness of their research findings.	This seems to work very well in all the RPC thanks to their academic networks.		Learning

Highly recommended tools

M&E tool	Short description including examples	Can successfully track	Comments	Monitoring or Evaluation	Learning or Accountability
Baseline studies of policy context and policy actors' behaviour					Learning
Communications officer exercising quality control		Can successfully track the quality of a wider range of outputs not covered by academic peer review, such as press releases, policy briefs, videos, meetings, or network interactions.	However, these results (i.e. the *quality* of these outputs) are not usually commented on explicitly in reports to DFID – instead, the *quantity* is recorded.	Monitoring	Learning
External programme advisory group, and in-country advisory groups		These groups can potentially – and more informally – track the quality of the programme's interactions with target groups (e.g. policymakers) and the programme's embeddedness in its policy context. In other words, they could be important monitors of the programme's potential *impact pathways* and the quality of its relationships.	It is not clear to what extent these groups are being used to monitor impact pathways in current RPC.	Evaluation	

Network Functions Approach or Social network analysis (SNA)	The Network Functions Approach focuses on the functions that a network carries out including: filtering, amplifying, investing, convening, facilitating and community building. Examples Other approaches based on Social Network Analysis can be very effective in tracking the relationships between the partners of the programme	It can track the development of the RPC community (or partnership) and how this related to other activities that the RPC is expected to deliver on (i.e. research and communications).	SNA and the NFA should be used to plan the development of the partnership. It can also provide a platform for its evaluation.	Monitoring	
Impact log	A simple database of anecdotal evidence of impact on policy actors collected via emails, journals, blog entries, etc.	Links between activities and their effect on policy actors and beneficiaries.	It needs to be carried out systematically to be reliable	Monitoring	Learning and accountability
Monitoring of budgets and expenses	Can provide information on best practices and 'value for money' of research, communications and research communication activities				

Chapter 4: Specialised tools useful in different contexts

This section focuses on M&E tools/approaches which have been tried/explored by one or more RPC, which are innovative/challenging and might need more mentoring/skills to deliver results, along with the kinds of results/impact these approaches can track. The table includes other innovative tools for specific M&E objectives. These are typically specialised tools that could be used for RPC with greater interest in particular aspects of impact.

M&E tool (or approaches?)	Interested RPC	Can successfully track	Comments Should it be mandatory for RPC?
Process Documentation	The RiPPLE Media and Communications Officer has been trained in process documentation by IRC and is developing a plan to support and implement process documentation in collaboration with the Comms Team	Can successfully track the processes of interaction that the programme hopes will result in impacts, and can help to monitor and revise these processes	
Outcome Mapping (OM)	Citizenship DRC, IPPG and RECOUP wish to use OM (or elements of OM)	Can successfully track behavioural change and assess the programme's contribution (including through its partners) to this change	
Stories of Change	EfA is monitoring progress against the milestones identified in the Stories of Change for priority stakeholders	Can successfully provide qualitative assessment of changes and the processes that led to these changes	Stories of Change are documented after the fact, but Stories of Change can also be written up as future scenarios that the programme aims to achieve (progress is then monitored against the envisioned scenario)
Case studies	TARGETS is using short case studies; Effective Health Care plans to use case studies	(Same as Stories of Change)	
Success stories	Effective Health Care plans to use success stories	Can document achievements (including changes)	
Most Significant Change (MSC)	**Citizenship DRC has used MSC**; RECOUP is hoping to use MSC	Can successfully track to what extent the programme is contributing to significant changes	Can help to sharpen the programme's focus on the kinds of change that are considered most significant to achieve

Chapter 5: Support on M&E for RPC

M&E challenges are as, if not more, diverse than those experienced by RPC on research communication. Support must consider a range of resources and services for a number of actors within the RPC.

Support options include:

- Clear standards for RPC's own M&E that provide them with a set of minimum standards related to M&E processes and tools – as well as competencies and skills that need to be present in their programmes. This wiki provides a list of:

    o Essential M&E and

    o Optional M&E tools that the programmes can use.

- Support to RPC M&E that allows them to learn from other programmes, themselves and other communities where M&E of research communication is being further developed. For this, DFID and its partners could provide:

    o Clear guidelines & tools that are frequently updated – as in this wiki

    o A community of practice for M&E of research communication as well as M&E and Communications staff of policy research programmes. The community should enable its members to set up and develop interest or working groups to review, update and improve the existing minimum standards, recommended tools and guidelines.

    o Capacity development for all relevant staff before the programme is designed so that the latest M&E knowledge and best practices can be incorrorated in the planning process. Ongoing capacity development should be planned throughout the lifetime of each programme since many of the required skills and competencies can be acquired in a progressive manner.

    o Periodic review of M&E frameworks and outputs to ensure that minimum standards are enforced and that best practices and lessons are shared. This could be modelled on the experience of a network like ALNAP that begun by providing their members with reviews of their work and has now moved on to do research and even explore and promote innovation by setting up a small applied-research team within the secretariat.

- External evaluations

    o Of RPC (especially long term impact)

    o Meta-analysis and systematic reviews.