

Influencing policy processes in Peru: the role of networks

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Abstract

This paper uses the functional approach to understanding networks to learn across several research policy networks in Peru. It considers the context and challenges they face as well as the various ways in which they have sought to overcome internal and external constraints to affect pro-poor policy changes. The paper finds that these networks carry out vary different strategies to research and communicate evidence; are organised around different structures; and address multiple policy issues. Based on their experience, the paper presents some of the best practices followed by the networks studies and puts forward a series of recommendations that attempt to bridge the knowledge gaps between them.

¹ Any questions or comments to e.mendizabal@odi.org.uk. For this project, I relied on the assistance of Lorenzo Oimas in Lima who led on the identification of the networks as well as the processing of the responses from the questionnaires and interviews. He has also worked on a separate context assessment of the research policy linkages in Peru.

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Networks in Peru: Achieving and supporting change

This report looks at the roles that research policy networks are playing in Peru. We ask what the Peruvian economic and social research community is doing to affect a larger impact on pro-poor policy processes in Peru. Within this we focus on the role that research policy networks play; specifically, we study their strategies and try to identify and comment on some best practices.

Understanding networks is difficult when one considers that networks are, in essence, relations between two or more people or institutions. A clear-cut definition of a research policy network is therefore hard to come by. Networks are very different from each other, have different objectives, very different members and work in even more different ways. Describing networks, on the other hand, seems a more realistic way of trying to understand them. To describe them in a useful way, however, we consider the functions that networks are designed to (or intent to) carry out. We consider that research policy networks can have two overarching 'supra-functions' that define their *raison d'être*: Agency networks which are themselves the agents of policy change; or Support networks which assist their members to achieve change themselves.

Within these supra-functions, networks can carry out one or more of the following 6 functions:

1. Filtering to 'decide' what information is worth paying attention to and organise unmanageable amounts of information.
2. Amplifying helps take little-known or little-understood ideas and make them more widely understood.
3. Convening to bring together different people or groups of people.
4. Investing/Providing networks offer a means to give members the resources they need to carry out their main activities.
5. Community building to promote and sustain the values and standards of the individuals or organisations within them.
6. Facilitating to help members carry out their activities more effectively.

We argue that these functions can help us understand what networks do. How (well) they do it will depend of their structure, which in turn is partly determined by the choice of functions.

Using this framework we studied seven networks in Peru: CIES, CONVEAGRO, Foro Educativo, Foro Salud, Participa Peru, the Mesa (for the wellbeing of the elderly) and Peru 2021. We interviewed some of their officers and members and gathered basic information about the networks' functions and structure using a questionnaire, secondary evidence and their own comments.

Main barriers to policy influence: According to the networks interviewed, they face barriers to policy influence that are similar to those faced by networks in other contexts. The main challenges identified by the networks are:

1. High turnover of policy makers: difficult and costly to establish long term working relations with the public sector; which makes the use of evidence relatively more expensive
2. The government is still closed to participation and receptivity depend on a few individuals with close ties to CSOs
3. Lack of understanding or interest of the key issues among the media: difficult to use it to raise awareness and communicate complex issues
4. Lack of policy analysis: research is fragmented making it difficult to address specific policy issues that often require a holistic and practical approach

5. CSOs have no institutional memory: know-how is held by only a few individuals or institutions
6. CSOs carryout mostly ad-hoc policy influence activities: most CSOs lack the technical and financial capacity to plan ahead and be ready for windows of opportunity

Emerging themes: Networks have to make many choices regarding their functions and structures:

1. Institutional vs. individual membership: this affects the degree of Agency or Support of the secretariat or network entity
2. Policy influence alone vs. policy influence through empowerment: this affects the investment in community building functions
3. Partnership vs. sub-contracting relations: this affects the degree of inward looking functions such as filtering and community building
4. Centralised vs. decentralised: this affects the strength and freedom of action of the secretariat (or one of the members)
5. Legitimacy via representation vs. credibility: this affects the investment in community building functions vs. other more research oriented ones
6. Creating networks to fill gaps and develop strategic partners: this affects the adoption of functions to coordinate efforts with the new ones
7. Research capacity at the secretariat vs. the members: this will affect how much the network's members and their opinions are part of the agency process
8. Managing change: this affects the way and order in which functions are incorporated into the network

Best practices: Regardless of the internal and external challenges faced by networks, there are excellent examples of best practices among them that could be applied in other contexts:

1. Plan medium to long term communication strategies
2. Link the grassroots with the policymakers
3. Go after key individuals in the policy process
4. Create spaces for debate
5. Use the system and the spaces for policy engagement that it provides
6. Be media savvy and employ media experts
7. Create new or expand the networks to provide strategic support and agency

Recommendations: Based on the challenges faced, their best practices and the structural choices with which networks are faced we suggest some recommendations for them to follow:

1. Define the purpose of the network (Agency and/or Support)
2. Find the right structure for the network; given the functions it aims to fulfil
3. Carryout holistic short/long term policy influence strategies: strategic opportunism
4. Develop living institutional memories by introducing knowledge management tools
5. Strengthen internal relations (member to member)
6. Develop inter network relations
7. Integrate consultation with the members and policy influence
8. Use affordable and friendly social technologies to enhance the network's capacities
9. Make sure that members are constantly motivated to participate in the network

Introduction

The Peruvian economic and social research community is highly respected and regarded internationally. It is made up of competent and professional researchers, consultants, practitioners and academics educated through a mixture of national and international curricula. There is a healthy number of research centres, think tanks, academic institutions, national and international NGOs and research policy networks that produce and use economic and social research in development policy and practice.

Peru is one of those countries where the answers seem to be there, ready to be grabbed and put into practice. Nonetheless, the reforms and policies that this same research community has been calling for during the last 15 years have been ‘famous for their absence’, as the Peruvian saying goes.

This report looks at the roles that research policy networks are playing in Peru. We ask what is the Peruvian economic and social research community doing to try to affect a larger impact on pro-poor policy processes in Peru? Within this we focus on the role that research policy networks play; specifically, we study their strategies and try to identify and comment on some best practices.

The structure of the report is as follows. In the following section we present a conceptual framework for the study. It centres on the different functions that networks can play, and in particular, those related to linking research and policy. The next section addresses the current policy context in which research policy networks operate in Peru. This section draws from a separate report into the research-policy linkages and the drivers of change in Peru. We then introduce a set of key Peruvian research policy networks highlighting the various functions that they play and identifying key best practices in using evidence to influence pro-poor policy processes. In another section we present an assessment of the structural requirements of some of these functions (resources, skills, governance characteristics, etc.) and best practices. Finally, we set out a series of recommendations for research policy networks in Peru and in similar policy contexts.

Methodology

The methodology for this study consisted mostly of field research using a series of qualitative tools. The study was carried out in Peru with the collaboration of 7 research policy networks based in Lima, but with national reach. Their participation consisted of responding to a questionnaire (Annex 1) and agreeing to a series of open ended interviews with us. These interviews served to further explore the networks’ main concerns, the barriers they faced to influence policy processes with research based evidence and some of their best practices. The interviews lasted between one and two hours and involved network managers and members.

They were also asked to comment on the policy context. However, this section was mostly based on secondary evidence and an analysis using the RAPID framework: A diverse group of researchers were interviewed using the framework and their responses were aggregated to portray the policy context facing researchers in Peru.

The present report focuses on the lessons learned from the study of each network’s experiences.

Conceptual framework: networks, functions and form

Networks have become a buzzword in the last decade and are set to continue to reign well into the 21st century. Why? Because they seem to provide a solution to just about every problem faced by organisations and individuals and because, despite all the hype, little is known about them: what they are, what they do and how they work. A network can be broadly defined in terms of relationships between agents (individuals or organisations). This leaves the door wide open to a myriad of interpretations of what we call networks; ranging from relationships based on kinship, friendship or other social values to complex technology based virtual communities, passing through everything from governance structures to corporate joint-ventures and value chains. Narrowing the definition, however, will only leave out similarly large myriad of networks. In the case of networks influencing policy, focusing on formal networks excludes social networks; unmistakably informal and influential.

This study focuses on one particular type of network. One that produces or uses evidence to influence policy processes (in particular, with pro-poor policy outcomes). However, our criteria of analysis is not the network itself, but the functions it carries out to bridge research and policy.

We concentrate on the functions that networks play for two reasons. First, they can help us describe networks without excluding those that might not fit any particular characteristic. If networks exist to solve problems then surely what matters is not whether it is formal or informal, knowledge or practice based or whether it is sustainable or not, but that they, in fact, provide solutions. Secondly, they can help us learn from them and advance recommendations of best practice to other networks.

Research conducted by the ODI (Mendizabal 2005) based on the work by Yeo and Portes (2001) and others (SISERA 2004, Creech and Willard 2001; and others) suggests that there is a close relationship between a network's functions and its organisational characteristics. In planning, form should follow function. In an ideal world, this would mean that all that a network needs to do is to define what it wants to do and then set up the necessary structure to carryout its functions. In reality, however, networks face internal and external constraints; e.g. limited resources and skills, imperfect memberships, communication barriers, external threats, etc. There are only a limited number of structures that any given network can develop and as a consequence there is only a limited number of functions it can perform. Inevitably, in practice, function follows form.

Functions²

Our approach to networks is functional. Hence we begin by presenting Richard Portes and Stephen Yeo's (2004; Portes and Yeo, 2001) suggestion that networks can fulfil six, non-exclusive functions:

1. **Filter:** The filtering function of a network allows unmanageable amounts of information to be organised and used in a productive way. Filters 'decide' what information is worth paying attention to. This function, unlike the others, is a passive one. Other networks or actors or other functions within the network collect and provide the information to the filter. Media content editors often carryout filtering functions by 'deciding' what is disseminated to the general public. Filtering networks can provide policymakers with a similar service. Ministers and members of parliament, for instance, have networks of advisors and informers

² For a more detailed explanation of each function and examples of activities and networks under each one see: <http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Projects/PPA0103/Index.html>

that filter evidence and research on any one particular subject and provide them with, hopefully, the necessary information they need to make a policy decision.

2. **Amplify:** Amplifying functions of networks, as well as filters, are more clearly related to the roles that the media play (in fact, the media plays both roles). Amplifiers help take an idea or a message from a private or complex state and transfer it to a public or simple –or understandable– one. Advocacy or campaigning organisations or alliances such as Greenpeace, Oxfam or the Jubilee Campaign are examples of amplifying networks. Amplifying, however, can serve several roles. Amplification can be used to disseminate a message or idea; it can involve a communication processes (which involves a two way relations); and it can be used to manage others.
3. **Invest/provide:** Investing networks offer a channel to provide members with the resources they need to carryout their main activities. Investor/provider networks can take many forms and may involve the distribution of goods and services from within the network (member led) or from outside the network (acting as brokers). Networks can also be useful to invest or provide to third parties –non-members. The network provides the platforms and mechanisms to invest on non-members such as government departments, NGOs, the private sector, etc.
4. **Convene:** Convening networks bring together different individuals and groups. In the case of research, a convening network would bring researchers together to plan and carryout research; it would, for instance, convene researchers from different nationalities or disciplines. A convening network can also bring together users of the products or services of networks or their members: for instance, policy makers looking for advice or ideas. The functions of a convening network go beyond filtering and amplifying and require the ability to reach out to very specific audiences in several sectors and levels.

The convening functions of a network, unlike the amplifying ones, require that the audience be more narrowly defined: it is made up of either members of the network or very specific groups such as public and private decision makers. Hence, a convening network must develop context and audience specific tools to communicate and disseminate its goods. Convening products differentiate between audiences. This is different from producing a newsletter that discusses several issues that might interest different groups; convening implies having separate newsletters. It is also not the same as offering a whole range of types of products for all members; but to offer a differentiated product to each member.

5. **Build Communities:** Community building functions promote and sustain the values and standards of a network of individuals or groups. Community building networks can work towards the formation of informal neighbourhood groups, formal research communities and even ‘expatriate’ communities. Community building functions illustrate another aspect of networks that is important to keep in mind: some exist as a means of supporting a type of community; if they did not exist, the community would disappear. In some cases they begin to provide services to the members and act as amplifiers of their problems to a wider audience but this is often not their primary function and therefore they are not organisationally prepared for it. A research community network might be faced with a structure that supports and promotes its member’s research efforts but might be unable to provide the adequate linkages to policymakers. The literature on social capital provides interesting examples of community building networks that develop several strong links within the network but none or few weak links to others. Unfortunately for those interested in bridging research and policy, community building networks provide the right environment for the development of good quality research –they are effective in producing,

sharing and advancing knowledge among researchers- but are not effective in promoting it or linking to more policy oriented networks without reducing its research capacity.

6. **Facilitate:** Facilitating functions help members carryout their activities more efficiently and effectively. In the case of research networks these might include the organisation of conferences and meeting, publishing working papers and policy briefs and providing mentoring to researchers or key individuals. Facilitator networks, like facilitators at a workshop help make things happen but do not need to be involved with the member's work. Facilitating functions are the hardest to differentiate from the others because, in theory, networks are created to facilitate the achievement of any particular objective. In this case, facilitation refers to the actions of networks that are different from those that are the main actions of the network's members.

It is important to emphasise that these roles are not exclusive; most networks can play more than one role, in fact, most successful networks do. What is important, however, is to recognise that not all networks can play all roles and that some networks can only play certain roles: those they were designed for. It will also be useful to understand the processes through which networks can carryout more than one function. Is there a sequencing patter that networks have to follow? For example, do community building networks need to become filtering networks before they can act as amplifiers?

These six roles can then be used to understand what networks do and what they are for. It will also help us understand what they need in order to work properly. For instance, they illustrate that specific actions or roles played by networks require more than one of the 6 functions suggested. To foster links between small NGOs and international actors, networks need to be able to invest in these NGOs or provide them with access to resources; they should be capable of convening local and international actors; and build strong community relations between them.

Supra functions

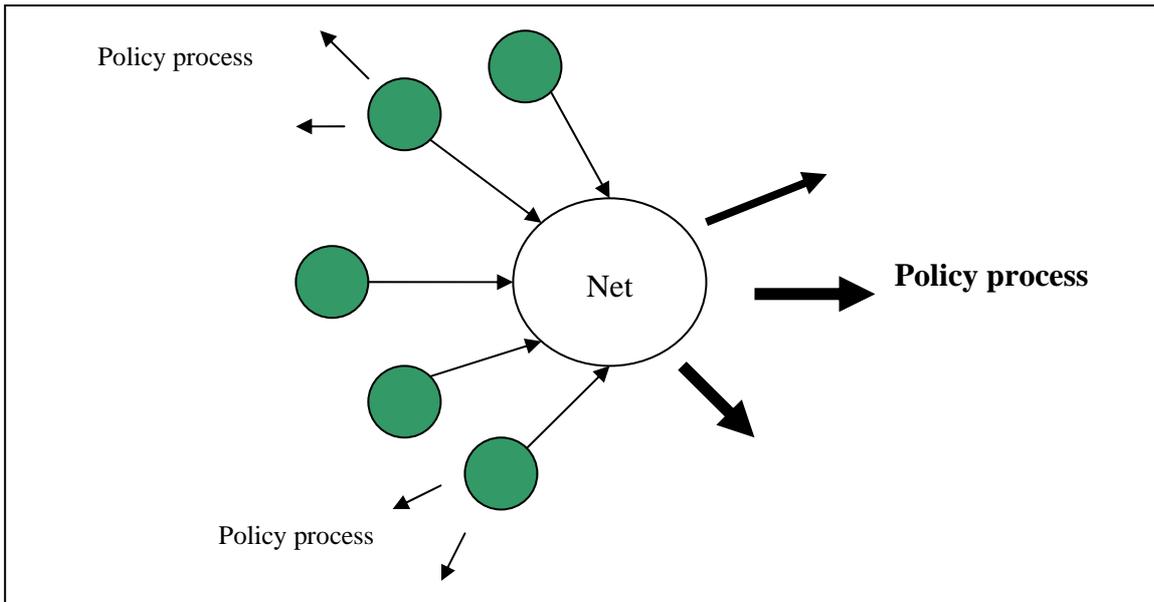
Following the study in Peru, recent work in Bolivia and Argentina has highlighted another key aspect of the functions of networks. Not all research policy networks are oriented towards an active and direct effort to change policies. Some networks provide their members with the necessary support they need to pursue their own research policy strategies. So it is probably easier to think of the previously mentioned networks' functions within two supra-functions:

1. An Agency supra Function and
2. A Support supra Function

These would describe their *raison d'être*. The Agency supra function denotes a network that is charged by its members to become the main agent of the change they aim to achieve. Hence, research and communications are networked or centralised; but in any case, coordinated. Members may pay a fee to the network (joining and/or annual), provide it with funds to execute agreed projects (such as a campaign), or allocate a portion of their programme or project budget to the running of the network. In other cases, such as in CIES, the network has the capacity to raise funds which allow it to run the coordinated programmes or projects.

In these types of networks, members provide (directly or indirectly) resources to the network secretariat (or the network as an entity) which in turn is charged with influencing the policy process. In the diagram below, the members empower the network secretariat to influence the policy process. But, independently, they can continue to influence their own policy processes.

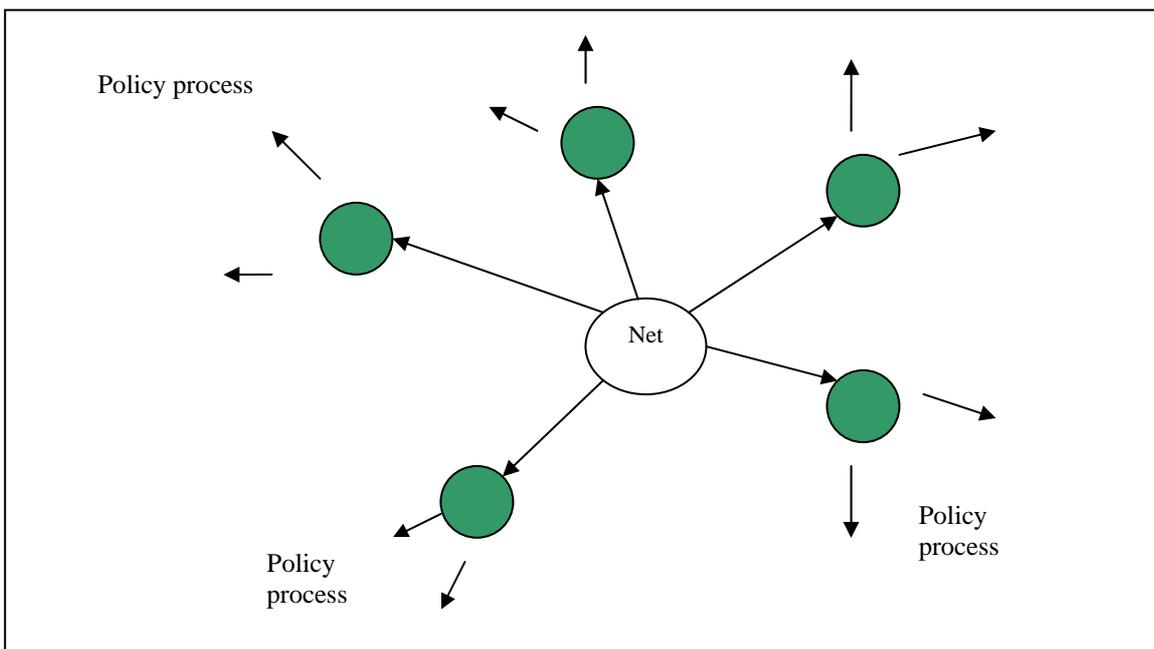
Diagram 1: Agency supra function



The Support supra function, on the other hand, works on the opposite direction. In this case, the network itself (as an independent entity or the secretariat) is not the agent of change. Rather, it supplies the network members with the resources (goods and services) it needs to carry out their own research and policy advocacy. The IFRTDAL, for instance, is a network of researchers and practitioners linked by their interest in the field of rural transport. Not all of them, however, work on rural transport itself. Some are labour practitioners, others are road safety researchers, and others are transport experts. The network provides them with research, tools and contacts on one of the many themes that they work on.

Unlike an Agency network, a Support network lacks the capacity (or the mandate) to influence policy; that responsibility rests on individual members or coalitions within the network. The diagram below shows how members withdraw resources from the network to influence their own policy processes.

Diagram 2: Support supra function



Within each supra function it is possible to observe all the other functions mentioned before. IFRTDAL, for instance, filters information and amplifies among its members. It brings together very different groups of actors (policymakers, researchers, academics, practitioners) with different thematic expertise, it has helped create a community of practice in Latin America and, when it can, it provides the members with funds, mostly for research. However, although the secretariat carries out a good job at running the network but does not have the capacity, or the mandate, to act towards achieving a policy change.

Bridging research and policy functions

The table below shows some of these same 6 functions; this time with reference to the different stages of the policy process. The main lessons emerging from it is that different functions are needed at different stages of the policy processes and that, in all cases, more than one is necessary; and they are present in both Agency and Support research and policy networks.

Table 1: Key ways in with networks can help CSOs to influence policy processes

Stage of the policy process	Key ways to influence policy	How networks can help	Functions
Agenda-Setting	Convince policy-makers that the issue is indeed a problem	Marshall evidence to enhance the credibility of the argument Foster links between researchers, CSOs and policy-makers	Amplifying Convening
Formulation	Communicate detailed evidence to policy-makers and work towards building a well-informed consensus	Amplify good quality, representative evidence Collaborate with policy-makers Bypass formal barriers to consensus	Amplifying Convening Facilitating
Implementation	Complement government capacity	Enhance the sustainability and reach of the policy Act as dynamic “platforms for action”	Investing and amplifying Amplifying, investing, convening, community building, facilitating
Evaluation	Collate high quality evidence and channel it into the continuing policy-cycle	Provide good quality, representative evidence Link policy-makers to policy end-users	Filtering, Facilitating Convening, amplifying and facilitating

All stages (underlying)	Capacity-building for CSOs aiming to influence policy	Foster communication Provide support and encouragement Coordinate member evaluations	All All Community building, facilitating
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Source: Perkin and Court (2005)

The structure of the network

Having defined the functions that networks can play, the next step is to define how its structural characteristics (organisation, skills, resources, etc.), or organisational practices affect its capacity to carry them out satisfactorily. For instance, what type of membership does a network need to be a successful amplifier? Is it the same as the membership needed for community building? Most likely the answer is not. Amplifiers will benefit from outward looking members, while community builders from inward looking ones. I have already argued that an Agency network has a different basic member-secretariat relationship than a Support network.

So we consider some of the key organisational characteristics of networks and study them in the context of the functions that they intend to play and within the policy contexts in which networks exist. A preliminary review of the literature points in the direction of the following factors³. We have used them to guide our questionnaire and interviews.

Governance: What are the behaviours and processes in place within the network that govern its short and long term functioning? This category includes: Governance agreement characteristics (including conflict resolution and decision making processes); Organisational climate and culture; Network brand; Degree of formality; and Characteristics of a Governance hub

Localisation and scope: Where are the network and its members located both physically and thematically? Some parameters include: Level of centralisation; Global location; Level of action along the policy process; Scope; and Demand

Capacity and skill: Do the network and the network members have the capacity and skills necessary to carry out their functions and tasks? These include: Research capacity; Networking skills; Management/organisational capacities; and Fundraising capacities

Resources: Does the network have access to all the resources necessary for its functioning? Resources include: Staff; Infrastructure; Financial resources; and Research and advocacy

Membership: Who are the network's members and how are they related to each other? This includes: Membership criteria; Diversity; Inter member relations; and Strategic members

³ This section is the subject of a separate study underway at RAPID. The factors presented here are suggested by a broad range of authors who discuss network's organisational characteristics, directly or indirectly. Key authors include: Ashman (2001), Creech and Willard (2001), Giddens (1976), Mancuso (2001), Ostrom (1990), Paalberg (2005), Söderbaum (1999), Struyk (2000), Tanner (2001) and Wind (2004). For further information visit www.odi.org.uk/rapid/projects/ppa0103

Communications: Does the network have appropriate communication strategies to carry out its functions, thus amplifying messages outwardly or sharing messages and information within the institution: Communications strategy characteristics; Means for communications; Responsibility; Capacities and skills; and Network brand

External environment: What are the external influences affecting the network? These may include: Policy context; Social and cultural milieu; Available technology; and Demand

Strategy and adaptive capacity: Is the network capable of managing changes and shocks in both its internal and external environment? Can it manage those changes on its own or does it depend on others (partners, networks, donors)? How does the network strategise? How does the network use research and manage internal and external knowledge?

These factors cover both the internal and external environment of the network and consider the structures and process that allow it to function and develop. Some of them are also stressed by more than one. In essence they provide a guide drawn from the literature and the understanding that the external environment, the internal organisation and the network's content matter equally when addressing success.

A brief note on the current Peruvian research-policy context⁴

To understand the research policy context in Peru is probably best to ask those working in it. In CIES' words:

The previous government in Peru was not able to consolidate a democratic political framework, nor an institutional network which could promote stability in the 'rules of the game' or long term growth. Furthermore, policymaking was extremely centralised around the figure of the President and a few institutions of the central government such as the Ministry of the Presidency, which controlled about a third of all public investment. Within Civil society, however, a series of very serious debates were developing: on the viability of the neoliberal economic model; sustainable development; the exclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable social sectors from the benefits of economic progress; the design and implementation of poverty reduction strategies and health and education policies; the reform of the state apparatus; and transparency in public sector.

In the last 5 years, Peru has undergone a series of half-baked reforms that have nonetheless opened a series of windows of opportunity that have clearly re-shaped the ways in which researchers engage with the policy process. After a decade of closed policy processes as described above, the return to democracy opened several new invited and created spaces for engagement.

First and most significantly, the power grip over the rest of the country including the other two powers of the State and the media, enjoyed by the central government during the 1990s, was lost. The new administration of Alejandro Toledo, in view of its failure to achieve parliamentary majority, had to work with other parties and civil society. This meant that non-party members were invited into all levels of the public sector and the policy process. Congressional committees were in many cases led and controlled by opposition parties and the cabinet included non-partisan experts from civil society and the private sector. Their participation meant that different views on public policy were integrated into the policy process giving researchers, in particular in the

⁴ A complete assessment of the research-policy context using the RAPID framework is presented in another paper by Mendizabal and Oimas.

development field, new avenues of engagement (e.g. via advisors, think tanks, parliamentary committees, research commissions, public debates, the media, etc.).

Second, one of Alejandro Toledo's campaign promises was duly rushed through the policy process shortly after his election: decentralisation. This has seen a dramatic shift of financial and decision making power from the central government to the regional level and hence a multiplication of individuals and institutions with key roles in the policy process. This has created a new demand for research based evidence at the regional and local level which many researchers, CSOs and networks in particular are targeting. Unsurprisingly, decentralisation of resources and control has not been accompanied by the development of the necessary capacities and skills to make a productive use of them. Regional governments and partisan associations have therefore turned towards civil society for assistance.

Third, an underlying participatory movement in Peru has finally come of age in the shape of several national, regional and thematic participatory processes. Decentralisation has formalised a series of participatory councils and forums that existed in some municipalities. These have joined the likes of the National Health Council that advises the Ministry of Health's on general and thematic issues, parent-teacher associations; participatory budgeting processes in many cities; and civil society poverty councils (Mesas or tables) which have for a long time helped define the poverty reduction agenda and priorities at various levels.

Finally: the US-FTA. The negotiation process, which has been extended beyond the government's original intention, has provided a perfect mobilising factor. Researchers have joined advocacy CSOs in formal and informal spaces to try to influence the process and outcomes of the negotiation. A significant proportion of the research being presented in the media and amplified via the various research policy networks in the country is directly related to it.

In the examples of networks below it is clear that these changes in the policy context have been crucial to define the current research-policy context in Peru. All along, however, it must also be noted that the research community is moving away from its traditional academic role towards a more policy oriented one. Again in the words of CIES:

Experience has shown that to engage with this context, public policies require a long term vision and the support of key technical and expert knowledge. Nonetheless, the Peruvian public sector has traditionally had a short term planning horizon, often resorting to improvisation. In response to this situation, the academic community in Peru, dispersed in renowned research centres, academic institutions and NGOs, [had] carried out scientific research and analysis of social and economic policies with the objective of contributing to their improved design. Therefore, it was crucial to foster links between these research institutions and the policymakers; particularly in view that there was no previous experience of the existence of an organised space for this type of dialogue.

Research policy networks: some Peruvian examples

This section presents a few examples of research policy networks in Peru. These were chosen to attempt to look at different types of networks aiming to influence policy and practice. Hence, some are highly organised and well funded ones like CIES, while others show clear resource constraints like the Mesa. The chosen cases suggest that networks in the Peruvian policy context make use of very diverse strategies to impact policy but also have, in some cases, significantly different objectives, which define their organisational structures.

Consortio de Investigación Económica y Social (Economic and Social Research Council)

CIES was founded in 1999 from the foundations of a smaller network (CIE) that grouped 5 research centres based in Lima since 1989. The new network included centres from outside the Capital giving it a considerably broader reach and scope; regionally and thematically. Originally with 22 institutional members, its membership has grown to 34, in 2005. These are organised around a very strong secretariat which makes most of the short term and operating decisions for the network.

CIES' main function is investing/providing on/to its members. Its activities are geared towards brokering resources from donors or experts to its various institutional and individual members (staff from member centres). They carryout meetings, workshops and training events. They channel the funds from donor agencies through a series of different competitive research grant schemes.

This investment is focused on the development of policy analysis capacity. Research is then matched with another important function for the network: amplifying to communicate. It uses different channels and products to amplify the findings of its partners' research. Through its website it filters information from its partners for easier access by members and non-members but this seems to be a minor function. More important, however, appears to be that of community building. Although this was not identified as an important function by the network itself, through its research grant programmes, CIES promotes the creation of smaller networks and has, throughout its history, promoted the creation and development of strong national networks. Foro Salud, another network studied in this research, the Macroeconomic Policy Network and the Labour Policies Network are examples of this community building function.

CIES is also one of the networks with a clearer and stronger communications and policy impact strategy among the networks studied. It does this in many different ways. Directly using the media and lobbying techniques or developing networked initiatives among its members. For instance, it has directly informed policymaking at the National congress through close links with its research department. And in a more indirect manner, it has influenced the policy process by training government officials in the use of household and demographic surveys.

The Macroeconomic Policy Network was supported by CIES bringing together academics from two of the top universities in the country. Their informal meetings soon became a space for the formulation of macroeconomic policy recommendations. Within the network, a macroeconomic model to simulate the effects on the economy of political trends and external shocks was adapted from a model developed by the Bank of Canada. This model was then taken up by the Peruvian Central Bank when one of the network members was appointed to the institution and set up a modelling department which took up the task of implementing the recommendations of the network.

An interesting quality of CIES' structure is that the secretariat is particularly strong, relatively to its members. These have awarded CIES the responsibility of taking forward their research findings and actively engaging with the policy process. CIES could be hence described as a network that combines Agency and Support. It provides its members with the resources they need to carryout their work (albeit in relation to the lines of work identified by the network or the secretariat) and advocates for change on specific issues on behalf of its members.

Foro Salud (Health Forum)

Like many networks, Foro Salud was created to fill a wide gap in civil society. Its original function, to provide a space for health researchers in Peru, was rapidly substituted for a more active set of roles that include the filtering and amplifying of information. In that sense, research is no longer the

core of Foro Salud's work, although it is still widely used. Rather, participation has become its main 'means' to the 'end' of policy impact. The network has slowly moved towards a convening function bringing together members from different backgrounds and levels through its thematic and regional fora. It has not yet, however, developed differentiated communication products for all its different members.

Foro Salud is organised at three levels. First, a Steering Committee (50 members) which deals with short term agendas and conflict resolution; the National Health Conference which brings together all health stakeholders and determines the network's long term agenda; and regional and thematic working groups or 'mesas'. In all, there are about 80 institutional members and 800 individuals in Foro Salud. The regional 'mesas' are fully decentralised while the thematic ones are currently centralised in Lima (although this is something that is currently being changed). They provide a space for participants to set out the network's position on specific health policy issues.

There are 17 regional fora and 15 thematic 'mesas'. Regional Fora are particularly important due to the current decentralisation process in Peru. Increasingly, the regional governments are becoming key health policy drivers and therefore Foro Salud is responding by actively promoting and supporting these regional spaces. The mesas include themes such as Reproductive and Sexual Health, Nutrition, Human Rights in Health, Medicines, Adolescence and Youth, and Decentralization. The 'mesas' are not part of the formal structure of Foro Salud, rather they are developed and ran in association with other institutions or networks.

Foro Salud's objective to influence health policies in Peru is carried out attacking three main targets: the National Health Council and its regional councils with influence the Ministry of Health; the health committee of the National Congress; and political parties. These have granted the network access to other spaces such as the negotiation advisory group for the US-FTA.

The US-FTA negotiation process has been the top issue on the Peruvian agenda for at least 2 years. Its impact on the social sectors, however, has not been widely disseminated nor discussed. Foro Salud, among other networks or organizations of civil society has been conducting specific activities aiming at influencing the negotiation process. Its work began with the publication of an edited book that brings together the most significant studies on the subject. Then it has engaged in a two prong strategy: First, it seeks to reach policy makers through a) its advisors and b) at the 'sala adjunta' (the waiting room outside the negotiation room where advisors and other interest groups wait at the negotiation rounds). This strategy involved a close relationship with the government which requires of a good network of influential members or allies. Its second strategy is to influence public opinion through media campaign, conferences, flyers, public discussions and various publications. The regional and thematic spaces are the main means used for this.

The role of evidence and research in this campaign has been limited to 'proving wrong' the government's position on many issues as well as in highlighting the costs that the FTA, as it currently is, will bring upon the country and the poor. This evidence, however, and as in most of the FTA negotiations process, has not been widely used by the key negotiating actors and drivers.

A key characteristic of Foro Salud is that it has opened its doors to all parties interested in health issues. As a consequence, Foro Salud has benefited from having a broad and compatible structure of Regional and Thematic spaces with those present in the National and Regional Health Councils. These have 19 technical teams which are more or less the same as the Thematic 'mesas' of Foro Salud, giving the network an advantage over other participants as they can arrive at the discussions well prepared with clear evidence and research to back up their positions. In fact, according to its

national coordinator, it is very clear that Foro Salud has been more successful when their thematic mesas had already discussed and arrived at a consensus on a topic later brought forward at the technical teams of the Councils.

It is difficult to describe Foro Salud as either a support or an agency network. It carries out both supra functions but in a limited manner. The secretariat itself is not as strong as CIES, with only limited resources to lead on networked initiatives. In essence, it seems that Foro Salud has created a national space for engagement that did not exist before, offering its members the platform or support they need from when to launch their policy influence campaigns.

Foro Educativo (Education Forum)

Foro Educativo was created out of the absence of continuity in public policies in Peru. This is often caused by a high turnover of ministers and other key policymakers; and this is not different in the education sector. In view of this and the slowness of the reform process after the fall of the Fujimori regime and the establishment of the new administration of Alejandro Toledo, a group of leading education researchers and practitioners came together to attempt to bridge the gap between research and policy. By doing this, the members of Foro Educativo hoped to provide a more stable counterforce to the irregularity of the public policy process.

Hence, according to Foro Educativo, its main function is that of community builder. As an individuals membership network it facilitates the work of its members and supports their own policy influence initiatives. It also helps amplify their opinions and research based evidence through different media.

Foro Educativo is a network with a small secretariat with a high level of voluntary labour and ad-honorem participation of its directors. Its 103 members come from different disciplines and sectors of the economic and political spectrum. It feeds from their research and work and bridge it with practitioners and policymakers within the network. Like Foro Salud, Foro Educativo has moved its focus from the National to the regional in view of the decentralisation process. This has opened new spaces for engagement via its own members but also through the creation of networks acting at the regional level. This has increased the burden on the work of the secretariat which needs to coordinate and manage these new decentralised initiatives.

Foro Educativo has also influenced the development of other networks: e.g. RECREA at the national level and FLAPE at the regional level. Foro Educativo gave them the technical support, helped create the necessary Basic conditions and then awarded them autonomy in their decisions. FLAPE is coordinated from Lima and it involves institutional members instead of individuals. An interesting aspect of this network creation by Foro Educativo is that they consider them strategic partners. In other words they have helped create allies to increase their capacity to influence policy.

A key structural characteristic of Foro Educativo is its membership structure. This is a network of individuals not institutions. This gives it more flexibility but it is also more difficult to secure their entire support and devotion. Individual belong to other institutions and have responsibilities that are not always in line with the network. This seems to be a characteristic that tends to result in a support supra function. Its agency work is then secondary.

Mesa de Trabajo de ONGs y afines sobre personas adultas mayores (Working group of NGOs and other organisations on the elderly)

The 'Mesa' is a network of CSOs working with and on issues concerning the elderly. It was formed after Help Age International (HAI) underwent a change from service provider to policy influence and sought to bring together its Peruvian partners. In this new space, the CSOs began working together and carried out some networked projects and initiatives that developed into the formation of a formal network in 1992. The Mesa is a particular case because unlike most of the other networks it has included a strong empowerment principle at its core. For the Mesa it is not enough to influence policy; what they want is for the elderly to be the agents of any change. Right from the start they set out to support its members and, above all, its constituents, to affect changes in policies and practices.

This is the network with the least resources among those interviewed. They depend almost entirely of their members' voluntary contributions (in kind and cash) and have limited fundraising capacity. Nonetheless, they are able to carry out a great deal of activities on behalf of their members – including networking, workshops, policy engagement and communications; probably because the empowerment principle means that its members are willing to strongly contribute to the network.

One of the network's most surprising achievements, considering its resource limitations, is its ability to represent its members in multiple participatory spaces. The rights and livelihoods of the elderly are not at the top of the government's agenda. This means that the network needs to address the issue in different fora: e.g. health, housing, security, domestic violence, etc. It is also the promoter and member of international networks such as Tiempos, the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) and others.

It is very difficult to pin-point the network's exact functions; particularly because it seems to do most things in an ad-hoc manner. However, it seems that its work is guided by a community building function based on the principle of empowerment. This also suggests a constant investment in its members' skills and capacity to influence policy themselves. The network also carries out amplifying functions communicating the activities and findings of its members to a wider audience but also by participating, on their behalf, of formal policy engagement processes.

The network has had various positive results in policy impact. For instance, it was instrumental in the process that incorporated the elderly into the responsibility of the Ministry of Women and Human Development.

This is a very interesting story. After a long process of debate at the National Congress as to which institution would be responsible for the wellbeing of the elderly in Peru, in with the Mesa participated, a consultant came up with a very simple solution: the regulatory framework of the Ministry of Women and Human Development, in its first article established that it is charged with the wellbeing of women, children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. The solution for the long debate was to amend the framework by adding the elderly to the list. This very simple solution brought down all the legal barriers to the implementation of the programmes already developed for this group.

Participa Perú (Participate, Peru!)

Participa Peru is a networked project. The structure of the network or consortia responds to the objectives and nature of the project. The project was intended to strengthen regional governments through the decentralisation process in USAID focus regions; hence it required regional partners.

The project also demand a good knowledge of the situation of vulnerable groups including, women, indigenous peoples, rural poor and people with disabilities; hence the partners were chosen among the institutions that had these same focuses. In one region where these skills were absent, the project had to build the capacity of a local partner to address some of these issues. The final choice was therefore based on their expertise and the experience that the Participa Peru team had had with them in the past.

This project is still relevant for the study of networks. Unlike all other networks studied, Participa Peru's members' relations are vertical. The network has moved away from its original horizontal 'partnership' relationships towards vertical subcontracts. This, according to its Project Director makes the project more efficient and effective. It still works in a networked manner, sharing responsibilities, expertise and information among its members but it does not rely on deliberative processes for short or long term decision making.

Participa Peru considers that these vertical relations allow it work with very different institutions: In Huanuco, the network's partner is a voluntary organisation; in Ayacucho it is an environmental NGO; in Pasco the member had to be trained and developed to the necessary standards; in Junin the partner is a national women rights NGO; in San Martin the partner is the Catholic Church.

Within this structure the network is able to easily filter information to and from its members, invest the project resources in a planned manner (and build the capacity of its members when necessary) and has developed a series of amplifying activities to communicate to the various 'clients' of the network: policymakers at the national level, policymakers at the regional and local level, civil society and the general public. The projects' key decisions, research and communication strategies are therefore the responsibility of the team project team.

Interestingly, Participa Peru is also one of the few networks that have developed more refined convening products. They address each audience with different strategies and communication products and means. Even their choice of media to reach the general public follows this differentiated approach: the newspaper that carries their supplements publishes regional editions allowing Participa Peru to tailor the message to each region. They also have a well defined process to develop communication products: they start with academic papers presented to the research community; these are then re-structured in a friendlier format for policymakers; and finally re-written for the broader public.

Its efficiency-orientation suggests that the network has an Agency supra function. However, unlike the model suggested above, in this case the network's secretariat or entity acts as the agent of change through its partners. Not providing them with support but assigning them specific centrally planned roles to carryout.

Convención Nacional del Agro (National Agrarian Convention)

CONVEAGRO is a national network of people and institutions involved in rural development and in the agriculture sector in particular. The membership includes 17 trade unions of the main agricultural products in the country. The rise of CONVEAGRO is in itself a telling story. In 1992, the 'network' was a single annual event focusing on one issue. Only in 1998, the organisers decided to apply their convening power to develop a more permanent space of debate and engagement. The US-FTA provided the necessary spark to what has become a truly powerful arsenal. The beginning of the US-FTA negotiations created a dilemma for CONVEAGRO's members: they had to participate in the negotiation of an FTA that would have critical effects on their livelihoods; but did not have the evidence to support for their demands. Hence the network set up a technical team

charged with the responsibility of carrying out research, communicating its findings and building the capacity of its members to use them. Although the US-FTA was still at the top of the network's agenda (by December 20005), the technical team and CONVEAGRO's members had begun to develop more long term research and policy influence strategies.

CONVEAGRO has used research to bridge the space between agricultural practitioners and policymakers. For it they perform many of the functions of networks. Most of all they filter information on the policy context to their members. Many of CONVEAGRO's members are regional producer associations often isolated from the national policy processes. In the past, these associations could only resort to violent mobilisations and protests to raise their demands. These, in turn, were based on their own perceptions of the effects of policies developed well beyond their sphere of influence. Hence their capacity to influence policy was limited. CONVEAGRO provides them with detailed information about the issues that affect them, the ways in which they affect them and policy options based on research. With this evidence, producers are better able to make decisions and choose from a wider range of policy influencing strategies.

CONVEAGRO also carries out important amplifying activities which add to the strategies of the associations. They amplify the messages of their members through formal channels and directly to the policymakers. The network, even though it has been branded as "the terror of the Ministry of Trade", has direct access to policymakers in the rural and agricultural sectors where they are recognised as legitimate and powerful actors.

This power comes from the fulfilling of the community building function that CONVEAGRO has intended from the beginning. It has brought together different actors who on their own had little power to influence policy. They have created a strong community that offers tangible benefits to its members. These participate actively seeking support and representing their common interests at the regional level; but also backing the network's agency on key policy issues. In summary, CONVEAGRO shows both Agency and Support supra functions. The network has the capacity to raise the necessary funds to carryout its own work; with gives them additional independence from their members' financial limitations.

Perú 2021

Peru 2021 is an association that advocates for the development of corporate social responsibility among the private sector in Peru as a way of achieving its particular vision for the country's future (in 2021). The association is governed by a board of founding members who represent some of the top corporations in the country and carryout the recommendations offered to them by the association. In practice, Peru 2021 looks more as a traditional NGO; but in theory it is constituted as a network charged with changing the practices of its members and other corporations in the country.

Peru 2021 facilitates the process of development of corporate social responsibility strategies for its members. They inform their leaders, guide them with a framework and examples of good and bad practices and direct them to specialists and experts to develop and implement their strategies. They are also not a pros-elitist network; they do not offer unsolicited advice to corporations. As a result they do not provide any more additional agency beyond that directed to informing the general public and assisting their partners. There is little research produced within the network; on the benefits of corporate social responsibility on beneficiaries or corporations, consumer trends, identification of social demands or needs, etc.

It performs a good amplifying role through a well developed communications strategy. The brand 'Peru 2021' is well known beyond the corporate and development sectors. They have positioned

themselves as the leading institution on corporate social responsibility and have become the first point of call for any one interested in the subject. This is a best practice for networks dealing with specific policy or practice issues.

In recent years it has appointed a communications manager to develop and implement a coordinated communications strategy. A key aspect of this strategy is the central role that face to face communications takes. Convincing the disbelievers of corporate social responsibility begins with meeting them and addressing their concerns and myths about the subject. They most of the evidence that development researchers would consider basic to begin any influencing strategy; but do not shun from it relying instead on the use of the evidence that has the greatest impact (e.g. stories of corporation that missed the opportunity and were affected by not carrying out corporate social responsibility strategies) and developing the presentation process (e.g. tailoring to the expectations and needs of a corporation and its top executives).

Table 2: Summary table of networks and their functions

Network	Supra function	Functions (examples of activities)	Key structural characteristics
CIES	Agency and Support (both strong)	<p>Provider/investor: resources (grants), research and communications capacity, advice and mentoring</p> <p>Amplifier: research findings of members, promote the brand, various media and products</p> <p>Filter: research produced by networks, key research produced by others</p> <p>Community builder: promotes networked research projects and the development of thematic networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secretariat is strong and financially independent; this gives it the freedom to develop and implement communications strategies on behalf of its members without their participation at all steps of the process. ▪ Membership is institutional
Foro Salud	More Support than Agency (both moderate)	<p>Convener: it brings together regional and thematic fora -each discussion different issues, and includes institutions and individuals from all sectors involved in health issues</p> <p>Community builder: created a national space for engagement and supports the development and running of regional and thematic fora</p> <p>The network has moved from filtering to amplifying to convening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open membership has given it a truly national reach. The Forum has become through their members in a legitimate actor in the various policy processes.
Foro Educativo	Support (with some agency)	<p>Community builder: brings together all experts on the education sector, creates other networks, links people in different areas of the economic and political context</p> <p>Facilitator: it provides its members with strong links to each other and facilitates the debate process</p> <p>Amplifier: the individual or collective opinions of its members, through various media and at different levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual and highly selective membership has given it a strong political position: legitimacy originates from the credibility of each one of its members; by selecting most possible candidates for key political positions they hope to counteract the negative effects of high turnover in the public sector on long term policies

The Mesa	Support (with some agency)	<p>Community builder: promoting networked work among CSOs involved in the protection of the elderly, supporting the creation of new networks</p> <p>Amplifier: take the messages of each member to policymaking fora, other networks (e.g. Foro Salud) and international institutions (e.g. HAI, UN)</p> <p>Provider/investor: it empowers its members building their capacity to become agents of change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy influence through the empowerment of its members. Unlike other networks, the Mesa dedicates most of its resources to build the capacity of its members to become agents of their won change
Participa Peru	Agency	<p>Amplifier: communications strategy at the national and local level, though different media and with different products</p> <p>Filter: filter information towards its decentralised partners</p> <p>Convener: produces different communications products for each different type of audience (national/regional, public/civil society)</p> <p>Provider/investor: funds, resources, information, capacity building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sub-contracting relations between the secretariat and the network's members are considered more efficient than horizontal partnerships. This type of networked project is not designed to help its members carryout the own policy influence work but to allow the project to become the agents of change; members act as implementers at the local level.
CONVEAGRO	Agency and Support (both strong)	<p>Filter: filters information from the policy context and research community to its members</p> <p>Amplifier: amplifies the demands of the members and the policy recommendations of the network (based on research) to different policy actors, engages in different media</p> <p>Community builder: unifies the agriculture and rural sector into one strong and representative body</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The network has legitimacy based on its representativeness of the sector: Strength in numbers. It seeks strong unions and associations of producers and traders in the agriculture sector to award the network political leverage with which to introduce its evidence based recommendations.
Peru 2021	Support	<p>Facilitate: guide corporations in the process of developing a corporate social responsibility strategy by directing them to experts and other corporations with positive experiences</p> <p>Amplifies: the successes of its members and the model of corporate social responsibility developed by the network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It has developed a strong and easily recognisable brand. This makes them the first point of call for anyone interested in the subject of corporate social responsibility

Main barriers to policy influence

Regardless of their differences, most research policy networks in Peru face similar barriers to policy influence. This section collects the main problems encountered by the networks interviewed. In general, it can be said that they fall within three categories: First, the complexity or unfriendliness of the policy context; second, the shortcomings of the networks themselves; and third, the challenges of the means.

High turnover of policy makers

‘It is difficult to establish long lasting relations’, CONVEAGRO

All networks interviewed agreed that the main problem for policy impact in Peru was the high turnover and instability of public office. Policy makers’ time in office is not long (in average, there is a new Minister of Agriculture every 6 months in Peru, according to CONVEAGRO). This means that researchers or policy entrepreneurs need to re-educate them and re-introduce themselves; something that has often taken a great deal of time and resources the first time around.

Participa Peru and CONVEAGRO have similar experiences in this respect. In 2003, Participa Peru formalised an advisory relationship with the Decentralisation Commission of the Peruvian Congress. They had been invited by the then president of the commission, who had become a ‘champion’ for their cause. His local government and civil society experience was a key factor in his interest in the network’s advice. In 2004, however, the formal agreement was lost and replaced by an informal relation through the same Congressman, who was no longer the commission’s president. By 2005, unfortunately, the new President was no longer a ‘friend’ of Participa Peru and they lost access.

CONVEAGRO relates to this through many similar stories. The impact of research, they agree, greatly depends on the Minister in office. In the last few years they have experienced many positive and negative administrations: while one former Minister was actively seeking new research and evidence (and even created a research programme within the Ministry), his predecessor showed little or no interest in any type of research. Similarly, the former president of the Agrarian Commission used to attend the network’s Tuesday Steering Committee meetings where some of the key issues and policies are discussed by the members and invited experts. The new president, however, does not consider these meetings a priority and does not participate of them.

High turnover, and the importance of individuals in the policy process in Peru, also means that bridging initiatives or participatory spaces often disappear along with departing ministers or progressive policymakers and advisors. As a consequence, networks have little incentives to invest in developing long term relations with any particular policymaker or his or her institution. This is coupled with the reality that successful engagement in new participatory spaces implies overcoming a often costly learning curve.

The government is still relatively closed to participation

‘Receptivity depends of the individuals in charge (a key minister or president of a commission of Congress)’, Participa Perú

The best examples of this are found in the newly created participatory institutions such as national and regional decentralisation and participatory budgeting processes. The National Health Congress, for instance, has 13 members but only one of them represents civil society. Similarly, regional

participatory budgeting processes include not only a civil society minority but also the requirement that participants be formal institutions of 3 or more years of existence (which reduces the number of eligible participants) and their decisions are not binding to the regional authorities.

Informal mechanisms of engagement, mostly private relations with authorities, are also relatively limited and uncertain. According to Participa Peru, policymakers with local or regional government and civil society experience are more likely to use research based evidence provided by CSOs than those coming from the private sector or through party ranks. Politicians considered to be 'left wingers' have stronger links to grassroots and CSOs and are therefore more likely to make use of those relations when they hold office. Unfortunately, 'left-wingers' are yet to be awarded the broad credibility they enjoyed in the 1970s in Peru.

These barriers to participation plus the lack of incentives for policy impact induce researchers to a more academic stance. Although the barriers are gradually being removed, a top-down approach still lingers in the policymaking arena.

Lack of understanding or interest of the key issues among the media

'Difficult to use the media to raise awareness and communicate a complex issue with a clear message', Foro Educativo

For Foro Educativo, media coverage of key policy issues is limited to the most negative and shocking stories. According to them 'they are looking for the teacher who raped the student, not for an analysis of the government's education policies'. The use of the main stream media as a means of communication is therefore conditioned to a trade-off with the quality of the message.

As an alternative, some networks like Participa Peru, Peru2021 and CONVEAGRO have developed their own supplements to be distributed through national or regional newspapers. Others have invested a great deal of time in mentoring and supporting individual influential journalists or news editors. Unfortunately, this means that often it is only a few researchers or institutions that have access to them. In response, CIES has recently launched an initiative to train journalists on development issues in preparation for the 2006 presidential elections. This will hopefully help create new spaces for research-media engagement.

The media, hence, is seen as much as a barrier to policy influence as a potential ally.

Lack of policy analysis

'Too much thematic research but little policy analysis. Research is also often fragmented into so many areas that it is difficult to reach consensus proposals', Foro Salud

Researchers recognise that there are insufficient incentives for policy analysis. Research thrives in the economic, social and scientific arenas but is relatively absent in political and policy issues. Foro Educativo, for instance, demands more research on why education policies do not work –or simply what is it that they do. In CIES' view, it is a struggle to motivate the researchers of their network to carryout policy-relevant research. The Mesa, considers that the little research that does exist in their sector is focused on medical or geriatric issues and has almost entirely abandoned the option of policy research or analysis.

Even Peru2021, a network made up of corporative partners whose decisions one would expect would be widely based on clear-cut evidence, lacks the most basic research-based evidence on the costs and benefits of corporate social responsibility. There seems to be no culture of meta-analysis

or systematic evaluations of public or private policies and practices. And the few that do exist are not sufficient to support a reliable balanced debate.

This might respond to a combination of factor among which it is safe to highlight the incentives of donor's policies and researchers' own interests.

Fragmentation of research themes is another important barrier. Foro Salud, for example, has 15 different thematic discussion spaces. With knowledge management skills and resources lacking or widely unknown among the networks they are unable to aggregate the evidence and lessons held by the different members: they have no (or only short term) institutional memory. This fragmented structure is then replicated at the policy level (the National Health Forum has a similar number of thematic groups) making it relatively more expensive for researcher to engage on broad issues since they would have to simultaneously participate in multiple policy processes and engage with several policymakers.

As a consequence, it is very difficult for the networks, in particular for those with no centralised research or communication strategies, to develop and advance a policy position on any given subject. This makes it even harder for them to prepare for possible windows of opportunity; such as invitations to budget negotiations or changes in the cabinet.

CSOs have no institutional memory

One of the main concerns raised by all networks interviewed was that they 'do not know what they know'. They could tell that some of their strategies had been successful and that some of their publications had been extremely well received; but could not always say why. In large networks such as CIES, is it clear that there are excellent examples of best practices or researchers who are systematically successful in their policy influence initiatives; however, their know-how remains with them. The rest do not know about it or, if they do, they cannot learn from it.

CSOs carryout mostly ad-hoc policy influence activities

'And they lack the capacity to plan ahead and be ready for windows of opportunity as funds are not widely available for this', the Mesa

The less resource-rich networks like Foro Educativo, Foro Salud and, in particular, the Mesa, lack the time, funds and, sometimes, skills necessary to develop efficient policy impact strategies and respond to windows of opportunity.

Networks depend of project funding; little of which is allocated to communications and policy impact strategies or initiatives. Programmatic funding is still very difficult to obtain and core public funding is not widely available, in particular in the development sector.

Additionally, high turnover in the policy context also means that networks cannot afford to invest in long term research and policy influencing agendas. Authorities have different policy interests and priorities and therefore evidence that might have been valued by one could very easily be dismissed by another, as CONVEAGRO's experience shows.

As a consequence, their ability to develop and implement systematic policy influence strategies is also limited. They recognise that a more systematic approach would allow them to maximise their chances of impact as well as save valuable resources by means of more efficient strategies. However, the initial investment is in some cases prohibitive. A systematic approach would involve,

first, an assessment of what they have learned over the years about the policy context and how to influence it. They would also need to identify and acquire new research, communications and management skills that in most cases they do not have. And even then it is difficult to guarantee any immediate results.

Networks therefore, react to policy and, specially, funding opportunities. CIES' recent approach to the media responds to an IDRC funded project with aims to contribute to the policy debate over the upcoming electoral process. Similarly, Foro Salud's appointment of a researcher to help develop the network's arguments and position for the budget negotiations at the Ministry of Economy is a reaction to first, them being invited to participate of the process but, also, their failure to capitalise on the opportunity in 2004.

The key challenge that they face is aggregating their activities into a long term strategy; away from ad-hoc and unrelated activities.

Emerging themes

In the previous section we considered the context of the networks. In this section we look into the different aspects of the networks that exist with this context and consider the effects of these on their functions.

This first look at networks in Peru suggests a highly heterogeneous set of organisations. As expected, research policy networks serve different functions but do so in even more different ways. For instance, both CIES and Foro Educativo aim to create plausible alternative and long term policies to the short term ones often carried-out by the government. However, while CIES is a network made up of organisations such as research centres and universities, Foro Educativo is a coalition of individuals. Similarly, while CIES is, in itself, an agent of change, while Peru 2021, another network, offers support for its members to carryout that change.

Our interviews with key officials at these networks have suggested a series of emerging choices and themes that are worth highlighting. These can guide other networks in the definition of their own functioning. Some of these themes look into how the structure of the network can affect the functions and activities it carries out. Choosing between institutional or individual membership, having a centralised structure instead of a decentralised structure, and including or excluding the networks members in the efforts to influence policy can have significant effects on the network's ability to fulfil its functions.

Similarly, there are issues that are often left unanswered in other studies that have been highlighted during our interviews: the role of research, managing change, the source of legitimacy, and the creation of networks, for example.

Institutional vs. individual membership

Institutional membership can provide networks with additional resources that members contribute towards the running of the network or of a particular initiative. Resources may include funds, infrastructure and skills but also reputation. CONVEAGRO, for instance, actively seeks 'strong' organizations, mainly trade unions, that can add to the strength of the network in the political process. Similarly, the Participa Peru project identified its consortium partners based on their capacity to provide access to certain regions, and their regional governments, in the country.

Institutional membership, however, has its problems. When Foro Salud criticized the US-FTA on the grounds of a research that showed its negative impact on the costs of medicines in Peru, USAID funded members saw it as a conflict of interests. At least one had to withdraw –albeit temporarily– from the network.

Individual membership, as in Foro Educativo, means that members are sometimes not associated to either the network or the organisation they belong to. They represent only themselves. This has allowed Foro Educativo to be critical of the Ministry of Education’s policies even though many of its members hold key positions within it. According to Foro Educativo, ‘people have not made the connection between them and Foro’. This provides the network with much more room for manoeuvre and freedom.

However, individual membership also means that network-wide issues need to be discussed all the time as there are no institutional visions or missions that could guide or frame specific policy or issue positions. In an institutional membership network, the institution’s missions and visions are, ideally, in line with each other, so it is relatively easier for the secretariat or communication’s team to prepare a press release or opinion piece that will be accepted by all. In an individual membership network, these missions and visions do not exist (or are not public) and, therefore, network-wide positions need to be discussed issue by issue. This, unfortunately, counteracts some of the flexibility Foro Educativo has.

It is also more difficult, in an individual membership network, to guarantee that the members will contribute resources to the network. Individual members often want to rely on the network for support to their own work, which might be much broader than the more particular interests of the network and therefore will be less willing to contribute with funds, time or skills. This means that the network needs to assume its operating costs and directly engage with donors for funding.

On the other hand, Foro Educativo’s membership has succeeded in its objective of creating a wide and strong enough community of education researchers and practitioners. Members are now considered to be most of the possible candidates to hold key positions in the government –thus guaranteeing that even with high turnover of authorities the policies will remain. In a policy context in which individuals play key roles, this is seen as a good strategy.

Policy influence vs. policy influence through empowerment

Policy influence requires a great deal of resources to be allocated to communication and strategic planning activities. It calls for some allocation of responsibilities to those with specific skills and comparative advantages to maximise impact. In Agency networks this logistical hurdle is passed by awarding a secretariat or networked programme the responsibility for developing and implementing the network’s policy influence strategy. CIES’ secretariat, for instance is a fairly strong agent, quite independent from its members; in many occasions its members are unaware of the secretariat’s actions.

However, many of the networks interviewed in Lima had to balance the resource demands of this objective with those of another, equally important, one: empowering their members to become agents of change themselves.

The Mesa and CONVEAGRO are good examples of this. The Mesa, in particular, allocates most of its scarce resources to a community building function as a means of empowering their members (individually and as a group). They want the elderly to become agents of change. Hence policy

impact alone would not be an accurate indicator of their success. ‘Mesas’ in Peru, and also in other countries in the region, have developed from this same ‘empowerment’ principle. There are ‘mesas’ dealing with child rights, youth policies, gender issues and indigenous people’s rights, among others. In all cases, empowerment has been incorporated both as a means and an end alongside the objective of influencing policies and practice.

CONVEAGRO works with its own members to develop their capacity to use research based evidence in their negotiations with local or national authorities. Its members, among which are highly mobilised and radicalised trade unions, constantly discuss ways in which they can improve their policy influence strategies and seek advice from the network’s technical team. One of the main benefits of the influence through empowerment approach is that this awards the network a degree of legitimacy that is often absent among those that seek influence through the agency of a secretariat, independently of its members.

Partnership vs. subcontract

In the same line, relationships between network members and between the members and the network’s secretariat vary according to the objectives and functions they have been designed for. The Mesa, CONVEAGRO, Foro Educativo and Foro Salud include an empowering objective and hence highlight the importance of horizontal relationships between members. They also emphasise that the network is member-driven –the secretariat being an executive body that responds to the initiative of the members. CIES’ members are also considered partners but the emphasis on investor/provider and amplifier functions means that it needs to take the initiative on behalf of its members and have therefore less horizontal relations.

The Participa Peru project, on the other hand, was formed not to build a community but to achieve a very clear set of objectives. The choice of partners responds to the need to cover certain geographical areas and provide specific products and services to regional governments and the local population in general. Hence, the initiative and execution of the network’s strategy and activities are centralised at the secretariat (or project management team) and the network is more a consortium with contractual relations. In fact, the project is systematically changing partnership relations for subcontracts.

A subcontract provides the secretariat with the power to make decisions and implement them without the need to reach a consensus or having to consult with the other members of the group. When empowerment or partnership building are not objectives this type of relationship appears to be a possible desirable choice.

Centralised vs. decentralised

Again, relationships between members and with the secretariat suggest different patterns of network centralisation. However, there does not seem to be a particular relation between outward functions (such as amplifying) and the degree of centralisation. For instance, both Participa Peru and CONVEAGRO have well defined communication strategies and the necessary resources to do so. While the former has a highly centralised decision making process, the latter is strongly decentralised awarding its members decision making powers and freedom to amplify the message of the network in their own constituencies and, often, via their own means and strategies.

In this case, the network, provides backstopping support to the members, including, research, basic information, political context assessments, technical advice, connections and, most importantly,

legitimacy through representativity. This shows that some functions can be centralised and other decentralised.

CIES has a different arrangement to CONVEAGRO's. While research is decentralised (members carry out their own research or receive funds from CIES for specific networked research projects), the networks' communications and policy influence activities are centralised at the secretariat. The difference probably has more to do with the types of members each has than with their specific capacities. While CIES' members are universities and research centres with academic incentives that do not promote active political participation; CONVEAGRO's members are highly politicised and mobilised organisations with institutional incentives to actively participate in policy processes.

Representativity, credibility and legitimacy

The issues of representativity, credibility and legitimacy are dealt in different ways by the networks. Foro Educativo, for instance, carefully chooses its members based on a strict criteria of credibility; experience, respect, position in the sector, etc. This, they believe, awards the network legitimacy in the policy process.

CONVEAGRO, on the other hand, seeks legitimacy through the representativeness of its members and of the network as a whole. Hence they look for strong and broad reaching trade unions and producer associations whose legitimacy has already been established by their broad constituency or political participation. Nonetheless, under the current political context representativeness only gives them credibility before those who they represent. As a consequence they have worked hard to develop close relations to key strategic partners such as the Belgian Government, whose support they consider vital as it counteracts the negative perceptions that the country's economic and political elite has of some of their other supporters; e.g. Oxfam and its more politicised members.

Similarly, Foro Salud seeks legitimacy through representation by including among its members almost every individual or organisation involved in health issues in the country; encouraging participation through thematic and regional fora. This has already awarded the network an undisputable position in its short existence.

In a different vein, CIES' legitimacy comes from its research base. The network is an active promoter, producer and user of highly scrutinised and methodically sound research. Its members are well recognised among the research and academic community. This has given the network credibility before international and national development policy agents which has translated into legitimacy in the policy process.

Creating networks: from vertical to horizontal relations

It is difficult to imagine networks being created by spontaneous combustion or a kind of social big-bang. In reality, most of the networks interviewed are the conclusions of long processes of engagement between individuals and organizations of civil society. Foro Salud, for instance, is a by-product of CIES' work in the health sector and the coming together of a series of regional and thematic groups in the health sector in Peru (In fact, CIES hosts Foro Salud and provides it with backstopping services). Foro Educativo was born out of the relations that existed among a group of education researchers and practitioners, disenchanted with the prevailing policy environment.

One of the most interesting cases is that of the Mesa. Its history can be traced back to the early 1990s when Help Age International (HAI) began a move from service delivery to policy and

practice influence; as did many international NGOs. In this process, HAI brought together all of its partners in Peru and, for the first time, physically sat them in the same room. This was the first time they met each other. Out of this event, HAI's partners began to discuss ways in which they could work together and HAI facilitated the process that led to the formation of the first version of the Mesa in 1992.

Hence, HAI transformed its vertical relations with its local partners into horizontal relations between them. In the process, HAI had to adopt a new function: from Agent to Supporter of change; but also had to promote new skills and roles among its partners. This meant that the members had to learn how to work with institutions with different visions and missions to theirs: for instance, the network had to adapt to involve faith-based organisations. It had to change from providing services to the elderly to developing their capacity for policy influence. Because of this origin, and probably because they had previously developed from the grassroots, they had to incorporate an empowerment role in their work.

There are other cases of iNGOs kick-starting networks in this way. The key lesson from this experience is that HAI introduction of its partners was not enough. They had to (and still do) mentor the members through a long process in which they worked together in various networked activities as a way of finding the right terms of engagement for them.

The role of research

One of the key questions we asked ourselves at the start of this research had to do with the role of research in the network's work. It is quite clear that for most of the networks, good research is central to their image, credibility and strategies. There is not, however, a common pattern among the networks regarding where research is carried out, by whom, its type or for what purpose.

In most networks, research is carried out by its members; not by the secretariat. However, there are exceptions of this. The technical team within CONVEAGRO's secretariat is charged with research and policy analysis. Participa Peru's project team centralises much of the research role, in particular the production of synthesis of the action-research of its regional partners.

Foro Salud carries out some centralised research but this is mostly member led. The Foro provides a space for debate and exchange of ideas. CIES, on the other hand, actively promotes the production of research base evidence among its members. It provides brokers funds from donors through different competitive initiatives. As a norm, they give priority to networked research involving researchers from different institutional members. This process fosters intra-network ties and decentralises the research capacity, in particular towards the institutions outside Lima.

Although most research carried out in Peru is issue based, some policy analysis is being produced. CIES, CONVEAGRO, Foro Educativo and Participa Peru, for instance have clearly defined demand driven research initiatives thus ensuring a high degree of policy relevance for their research products. Others, like the Mesa (with little research capacity at the secretariat or among its members), have to rely on academic research on related issues but with little policy relevance.

The importance of research is also related to its purpose. Foro Salud, for instance, participates of the National Health Council participatory processes as well as of consultative bodies, through its regional and thematic fora. Research is therefore developed in an ad-hoc manner in response to the questions and issues raised within those fora; it is one more participatory tool. Although not central to the network's overall work, it is clearly important at the members' level.

Policy analysis, on the other hand, has a more clear purpose: direct influence on policy and practice. Hence, research has a much more central and explicit role in these network's communications and policy impact strategies.

The adoption of research activities within the network requires specific resources and skills. Larger and stronger secretariats tend to be able to carry out research. Smaller or weaker ones depend on its members' research capabilities. This affects not so much on the function but on the form of the network: stronger research partners will probably challenge the centrality of the network thus decentralising its power; stronger research secretariats, on the other hand will probably reinforce the centralisation of the network.

This can then have an effect on the networks' functions: a secretariat with research and advocacy capacity will need less of its members thus carrying out fewer filtering, amplifying or community building functions. A more decentralised network will probably have to engage more often with its members and hence carry out more filtering

Managing change

Networks change as a result of changes in their internal and external environments. They need to respond to new demands from their members or clients, manage larger memberships and adapt to sometimes hostile and other friendly policy contexts. Each network has means of managing that change; some more successfully than others.

Foro Salud is a network that has changed significantly since its establishment. It went from being a small group of urban professionals based in Lima to a national network with 20 different regional fora and 15 thematic ones. Most importantly it incorporated extremely different members to the original ones. The expansion of the network shifted the focus from the middle level NGOs to the grassroots and from professionals or academics to practitioners and beneficiaries. This has gradually expanded the number of themes discussed and posed a significant challenge to the national coordination. Nonetheless, the expansion responds (or at least coincides) with a change in the policy context. The last 5 years have seen the development of a decentralisation process that has increasingly awarded more policymaking importance to regional fora. The decentralisation of the network has therefore helped it manage its response to the challenges posed by its external environment.

CIES is another network that has endured several changes. The network is based on the foundation of a network founded in 1989, CIE, by 5 research centres in Lima. In 1999, the network incorporated 17 other members, particularly from outside Lima, and formed CIES. In 2001, the network was established formally as a non governmental organization and has progressively expanded its membership to 34 institutions. The network's membership, focus or scope, however, have not changed since 1999 and nor has its structure.

Managing this change requires specialised skills that are not always available for smaller or cash-strapped networks. The commitment and flexibility of its members are therefore important features of the network. Building a strong community around an issue (health) or an objective (research based policy influence) can develop the commitment among the network's members.

Table 3: Summary table of emerging themes and effects on functions

Structural issue	Effect on functions	Examples
Institutional vs. individual membership	Institutional membership can boost the amplifying functions of a network because it awards it greater ‘volume’. An agency supra function is easier to finance and support with institutions. Individual membership can make the network more flexible and make convening more easily with fewer conflicts. A support supra function is more attractive among individual members with little resources and time to share.	Institutional: CIES, CONVEAGRO, Participa Peru, Peru 2021, Individual: Foro Educativo
Policy influence vs. policy influence through empowerment	Policy influence alone requires a strong Agency supra function. This awards a stronger emphasis on outward functions such as amplifying and convening Policy influence through empowerment focuses on supporting a network’s members: building a community, filtering information towards them and investing/providing	Policy influence alone: CIES, Participa Peru Through empowerment: The Mesa, CONVEAGRO
Partnership vs. subcontract	Horizontal partnership relations between members create strong and sustainable communities. They may promote a balance between agency and support. Subcontracting relations are not interested in building sustainable communities and are more oriented towards the achievement of an objective	Partnership: CONVEAGRO, Foro Salud, the Mesa Subcontract: Participa Peru
Centralised vs. decentralised	A more centralised network may lead to the development of an agency supra function since the resources and skills would be centralised in the secretariat. A more decentralised network would mean that each member has different skills that other members need and therefore would show a support function. decentralised networks allow their members to carryout their own strategies	Centralised: Participa Peru, CIES Decentralised: CONVEAGRO, Foro Salud
Representativity, credibility and legitimacy	Legitimacy to participate of the policy process can come from the degree of representation of the network. This means that a strong community will award the network a political leverage to engage in formal policy processes Similarly, credibility stemming from research or individual’s social position can award the network legitimacy to participate of policy decision. Research facilitation, filtering and amplification of research findings will be important in this case.	Representativity: CONVEAGRO, Foro Salud Credibility: CIES
Creating networks	The process of creating networks is one in which the different actors need to adopt different functions in a sequenced and often overlapping manner. This means that the partners come together with different roles	The Mesa was created by the changing role of HAI: it became a supporter of its previous supporting partners; and its partners went from supporting its own members to

	and slowly adopt common ones. Network promoters often go from agents of change to supporters; while its partners from supporters to agents	developing their own agency capacity.
Research capacity	A secretariat with strong research and advocacy capacity will need less of its members thus carrying out fewer filtering, amplifying or community building functions. A more decentralised network in terms of research capacities will probably have to engage more often with its members and hence carryout more filtering and community building functions.	Central research coordination: CIES, Participa Peru Decentralised research coordination: Foro Educativo, Foro Salud
Managing change	Managing change sometimes means having to adopt new functions in a sequential manner to respond to a changing internal and/or external environment. For instance, including new members such as CIES when it moved from a Lima based CIE to a nationally inclusive CIES; or the appearance of new decentralised health policy processes that have affected the scope and reach of Foro Salud.	Filter to amplifier to convener: Foro Salud Community builder to amplifier: the Mesa Community builder/ amplifier to provider/investor: CIES

Best practices: how to use evidence to influence policy and practice

Regardless of the barriers the face, networks in Peru have proven to be relatively successful in influencing the policy process. They have done this taking advantage of multiple strategies, means and tools. Within these stories of success there are some best practices that must be highlighted and shared.

Most best practices are context specific. However, their lessons can be replicated in different processes. The following examples include the use of several communication products, using the media, linking grassroots and policymakers and taking advantage of the formal channels of participation.

Communication strategies

Communication strategies among the networks interviewed are relatively similar; with different levels of specialisation and sophistication. These depend more on the resources available to them than on their understanding of communications or of their value for their objectives. And their main resource constrain in this area is the lack of funding ‘for communications’ from their traditional donors.

Nonetheless, as the popular song goes, ‘when our guts begin to make noises, we’ll come up with something’. Resource constraints have not hampered the proliferation of communication material, among which it is possible to include:

- Newsletters (and e-newsletters): Newsletters are often directed to both members and non members as a means of communication. Successful cases, however, try to design differentiated versions: one for members which includes network governance issues and another for non-

members. When possible, convening networks must attempt to differentiate within members and non-members considering their key interests and the use they can give to the information provided.

- Specialised or trade magazines: most of the times, these magazines allow networks to present a summary of a long term project or programme. La Mesa, for instance uses this format to bring together some of the key conclusion of an annual conference.
- Books: Most networks publish books regularly. However, books need to address different objectives. In the case of Foro Salud, they have used this format as a way of documenting the network's birth and development process. They use it as well to disseminate its research and policy agenda. Books are an expensive means of communication; often demanding a significant initial investment for a minimum number of copies. Therefore, it is important to consider who will read it and what it is for. Presentation is crucial when trying to convey a message using this particular medium.
- Academic papers (working paper series): Academic papers are directed at academics, researchers or specialists on a particular subject. These, alone, cannot be expected to affect changes on policymakers' behaviours as it is unlikely that will be read by them.
- Policy briefs: Policy briefs, on the other hand, are designed as 2-4 page summaries of academic papers, research programmes or expert knowledge. They intend to convey very practical information about a particular issue; not set out the theoretical explanations of a problem or debate the alternative views or options.
- Web-sites: Not all the networks interviewed had a functioning, interactive web-site. ICTs are not yet available for everyone and, in some users' opinion, no web-site is better than a bad one. However, web-sites are excellent tools for affordable publishing of any type of format and can offer networks with a very important institutional image. Most research users and policymakers in the country do have access to the internet and this is relatively cheaper and far more efficient than public or private libraries. Hence the web has become a first point of call for information searches.
- Interviews and articles in the media: Being interviewed in the media or publishing articles in newspapers is not an open process. Usually through personal contacts, researchers gain access to radio and T.V. programmes. The same is true for the print media. Working with news editors is important in all cases as they are who decide what is newsworthy and deserves a space (in the airwaves or paper).
- Newspaper supplements: Peru 2021 and Participa Peru have successfully designed and published their own newspaper supplements in national and regional newspapers. This bypasses the long process of engagement with the media as these are often paid for. It also allows them to convey a complex message without the risk of being oversimplified by the media.
- Conferences, workshops and seminars: These are not organised as often as would be desirable but the networks participate of them nationally and internationally.

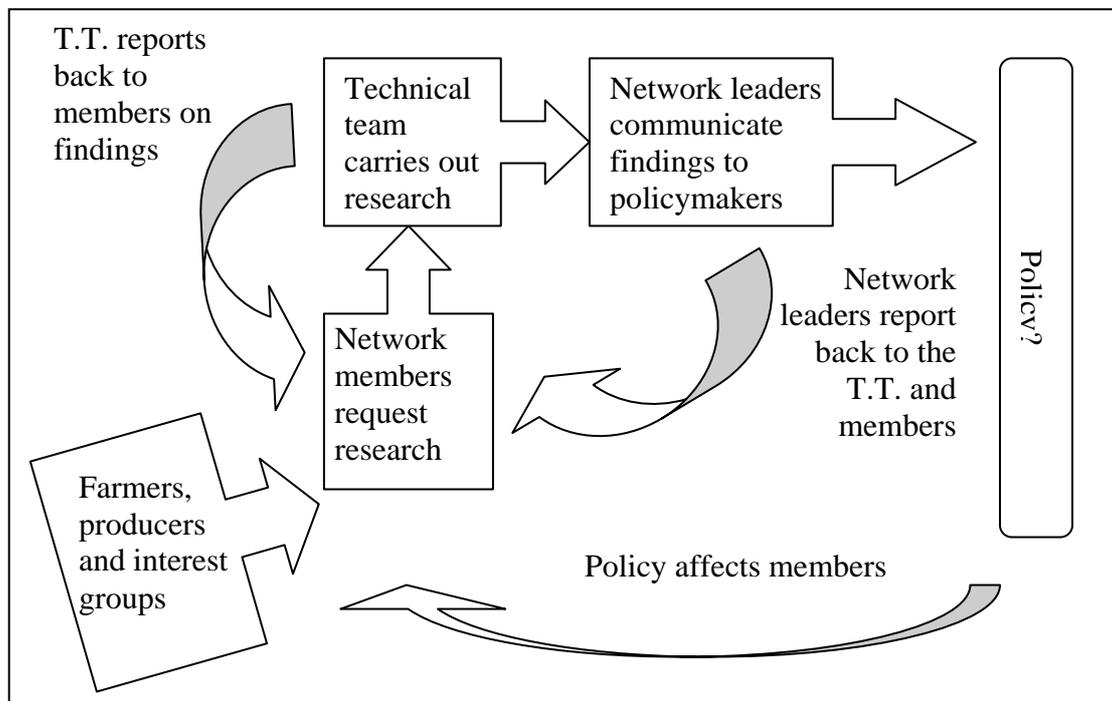
Unfortunately, only a few have communication strategies that integrate these products. They rely on the expert knowledge of communication practitioners (such as journalists, marketing or media officers) to develop and implement their communication strategies. Although expensive, a well designed strategy will surely raise the network's profile, strengthen it and even reinforce its sustainability.

Tuesday with the grassroots and Thursdays with the policymakers

Policy impact strategies are varied. A good practice is CONVEAGRO's attempt to influence policy using both direct and indirect means. Every Thursday, members of the network's steering committee or governing board have a working breakfast with the Minister of Agriculture and other key policymakers and advisers. This gives them the opportunity to inform policymakers about the

position of the network on various issues as well as to discuss the evidence developed by the network’s technical team and members.

Diagram 3: CONVEAGRO’s Research – Policy process



Simultaneously, CONVEAGRO seeks to indirectly influence policy through mobilizations and popular protests of some of their trade union members. Every Tuesday, the steering committee meets to discuss the running of the network as well as to report on the technical team’s research findings. During these meetings members of the network from all over the country attend to learn about the latest findings and to ask for specific information that will help their institutions’ decision making processes. It is not strange, for instance, for union leaders to ask the network’s technical team for answers to specific questions that will determine whether they will stage a protest or not.

This process of grassroots and policymakers’ meetings ensures that the network’s research is both relevant to both. The network acts as a facilitator of participation processes (even if they do not formally exist), amplifier and convener (even when both sides do not actually meet).

Meeting of CONVEAGRO's Steering Committee (Tuesday meetings)

The SC meets every Tuesday to discuss issues concerning the governance of the networks and learn about new research and debate other issues of political or practical interests to their members. The meetings are open to non-members and often external experts are invited to actively participate. Members from producer associations from all over the country often participate of the meetings –in representation of their organisations.

The meetings begin with the network reporting on the main activities carried out by the secretariat, including meetings, conferences and workshops attended, research done, etc.

The Technical Team is asked to report on its work; often in response to research questions put forward by the members of the networks during previous Tuesday meetings. For instance, what will be the impact of the US-FTA on rice producers? They are also asked more direct questions about the performance of particular public policies or their assessment of ongoing processes.

The SC also reports on inter-institutional relations and important discussions held with government officials.

The Tuesday meetings are also an opportunity for members to debate the network's as well as their own strategies. For instance, one representative of a producer organisation asked the Technical Team about the effects of a particular policy on their livelihoods. The association would then use the evidence provided by the network to debate and decide over a possible protest.

Tuesday meetings are, above all, an opportunity for members to discuss strategies, identify opportunities, voice concerns and needs and report conflicts in their internal and external relations. These issues are taken into consideration by the secretariat's research, capacity building and communications strategies. And most importantly, they are communicated to the authorities through the periodic meetings the network's officials hold with them every week.

Experts' takeover (going after the candidate)

Foro Educativo has developed an original strategy to influence long term educational policy in Peru. As a result of the high turnover of policymakers, 'políticas de Estado' (long term policies) are almost impossible to develop –let alone implement. Foro Educativo has therefore gathered most possible credible candidates for any important education policy positions as its members. This means that even with high turnover, the likelihood that the new Minister or vice minister will be a member is also high. Hence, the policy agendas developed within the network can potentially become long term policies.

In recent years, one of the leading opposition parties and a strong candidate for the upcoming April 2006 elections has systematically approached researchers and policy analysts. Participa Perú has taken advantage of this eagerness and extended its policy impact strategy to engage with political parties whose influence in the policy process is stronger at the regional level. In that sense, their regional partners organise a series of meetings and capacity building initiatives with the party's regional bodies, which in some cases include the regional government itself. In this way the network hopes to provide a bridge between current and future regional administrations thus minimising the unnecessary and politically driven policy changes that often occur.

Promoting and supporting debate

CIES is a unique network in Peru. It brings together a great deal of research institutions from all over the country dealing with many different development issues. It is relatively well funded and has developed a wide-reaching network of users and strategic partners. As such, it is able to convene various relevant interest groups. An example of a mechanism it uses is the organisation of meetings and workshops. It has the necessary resources and skills to set up a workshop or conference with little notice. These meetings allow network members to meet each other (something that does not often happens in networks with institutional membership) as well as experts and policymakers who are often invited.

CONVEAGRO's Tuesday meetings constitute a similar mechanism that brings together members and policymakers. It differs in that it is also a management mechanism for the network. This method, however, awards transparency to the deliberative process of the network, allowing those they seek to influence to witness the relations that exist among the members and the central role that robust and credible research plays in the process.

In a relatively small research community as the Peruvian one, meeting series are a potentially powerful tool for building a strong and better coordinated development community of practice.

Using the system

Most networks, like Foro Salud and CONVEAGRO participate of the government's invited spaces with respect of the US-FTA negotiations. This gives them the opportunity to keep their members up to date with the information used by the government; which then informs their policy impact strategies. For Foro Salud, working the 'room next door' is one of their main policy impact strategies on the US-FTA.

Similarly, they are currently working on a research agenda to prepare for the Budget Allocation negotiations at the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Although few, there are a number of public processes in which CSOs can use evidence to influence policy and these networks consider their use important.

Other, better funded and more policy oriented, CSOs have been more successful in engaging with the policy process. Reflexión Democrática, is a spin-off of a Peruvian lobby that brings together the main corporations involved in international trade. Over a long process of engagement it has successfully inserted itself, both physically and virtually, in the deliberative process of the National Congress. Their political connections (to a leading opposition party) and location (they are inside the Congress) but also their capacity to provide simple, relevant and prompt answers to the politicians questions have guaranteed them a place in the policy arena.

In this process they have learned how to take advantage of the system, prepare for policy windows and identify and exploit strategic partnerships. Using the system does not mean, as it is sometimes wrongly understood, that policy actors should not develop their own communications and lobbying strategies. Precisely, Reflexión Democrática's success rests on its ability to transfer its lobbying skills to the newly opened spaces for democratic engagement.

Media savvy

Using the media requires particular skills within the institution. Participa Peru, Peru2021, CONVEAGRO and CIES are examples of networks with the necessary skills. Peru2021, for instance, has recently hired a communications specialist to develop and implement the network's communication strategy. Peru2021's communications strategy considers two key stakeholders: the general public and corporations in Peru. The former is reached by a series of means including the internet newspapers and other mass media formats. Corporations (members and non-members) are targeted through personal or social networks and face to face meetings. In this case, the strategy is yet not active but it involves the development of highly specialised types of evidence and communication products.

CIES has developed a series of media related strategies. For instance, its researchers and executive members regularly appear on TV and radio shows. They also use policy and research briefs to inform the media on specific issues. They have developed a unique colour-coded format to make them easily recognised by the press. In a recent action-research IDRC funded programme that aims to develop a policy agenda to be debated during the current presidential campaign (April 2006 elections). CIES is carrying out a series of workshops with the media sector to build the capacity of journalists on the key issues and on methods to cover often complex and controversial issues.

CONVEAGRO's technical team includes a journalist who is charged with the developing of press releases and media friendly material. This expert's role is particularly important for a network whose stand on some key issues is diametrically different from that of the government's official position: Policymakers and influential corporate lobbies and interest groups involved in the US-TLC process consider CONVEAGRO as a 'trouble maker'. Their image in the media is therefore important

However, media skills are hampered by the indifference and limited capacity of the media to address the full complexity of the issues being put forward by CSOs. Initiatives like CIES' therefore are worth following up as they develop an informed demand for the research produced by CSOs.

Creating networks: networks beget networks

In line with pareto equilibrium and social networks theory, a best practice among networks in Peru is that of fostering the creation of new networks. There are many examples of this. Foro Educativo has helped create RECREA, FLAPE and CEAAL; Foro Salud was promoted by CIES; and the Mesa created TIEMPOS.

CIES' case is interesting (and comparable to that of Bolivia's PIEB⁵). As an investor network, it organises several calls for papers and research projects through out the year. These are designed to be carried out by groups or networks rather than individuals. This is similar to the way HAI helped create the Mesa; they transform rather vertical relations (patron-client) between them and the members into horizontal (colleagues) ones between the latter. It seems that networks work better with networks. Once the learning curve that implies working in networks has been surpassed, it seems that people find it easier to work with networks but most importantly they appreciate the value of networked work.

What is also very interesting is that in the cases of Foro Educativo and the Mesa, the networks created are 'networks of networks'; of which they are members. This is a bottom-up approach in

⁵ See: <http://www.pied.org>

which national networks create regional networks. CEAAL, for instance, associates 195 organisations from 21 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and Tiempos brings together national Mesas and other CSOs from the region. This key ‘best practice’ suggests that successful scaling up of networks is possible; even at the supra-national level. It also highlights the importance of bottom up approaches when it comes to networks’ development. In these cases, and in the HAI and the Mesa’s, the roles and shape of the network was intrinsic to the process which was, in turn, motivated by its future members. Another regional network coordinated from Peru is the IFRTDAL. This Latin American forum is part of a global network on rural transport and development (IFRTD). Originally designed to be a ‘forum of fora’ the network was supposed to be made up of National forums or groups. These national networks would then come together in IFRTDAL. This has not yet happened.

IFRTD’s national forums are ‘one man shows’ (in Latin America and elsewhere) who are finding it very difficult to create national networks. This difficulty probably stems from the fact that they are themselves not members of strong networks or not used to working in a networked manner. The top-down approach followed in this case shows contrasting results to the bottom up success of the previous cases.

Table 4: Summary table of Best practices of Peruvian networks

Best practice	What to do	Examples of networks
Plan communication strategies	Plan and implement long communication strategies using several communication products to reach different audiences and respond to uncertain environments	CIES Participa Peru
Link the grassroots with the policymakers	Develop clear and open communication channels (filter, amplify and convene) between the grassroots (or the network’s members) and those being targeted for policy influence. Make sure that members feel involved in the process.	CONVEAGRO The Mesa
Go after key individuals	In week institutional policy contexts it is wise to target key individuals with veto power in the decision making process. Include them in the network by developing convening functions or develop specific products and services for them	Foro Educativo Participa Peru
Debate	In many developing countries there are few spaces for public debate. Promoting debate within the network serves community building and amplifying functions. Organise workshops, meeting series or open debates hosted by the secretariat or members.	CIES CONVEAGRO
Use the system	Participate of existing engagement spaces such as participatory or consultative. Use well researched evidence, policy recommendations and solutions to real problems to draw the attention of the policymakers. Participation will give the network access to often undisclosed public information, contacts and insights of the policy process.	CONVEAGRO Foro Salud

Be media savvy	Engage with the media even if it is not friendly to the network's cause. Find possible allies within media institutions (e.g. editors, reporters, journalists photographers) to introduce the issues over a prolonged period. Employ or partner with media savvy people or institutions as media relations are costly and time-demanding.	Participa Peru Peru 2021 CONVEAGRO CIES
Create networks	A great way of finding strategic partners is to create them. Network with other institutions or networks to create and support more powerful networks. Create networks to deal with areas where civil society has little influence. Network secretariats must not be afraid of becoming members of other networks (and not being in administrative control) as this is valuable for the network as a whole.	Foro Educativo The Mesa CIES

Recommendations

Offering recommendations to networks working on different policy process and issues and with entirely different internal structures and external environments is extremely difficult. Those highlighted in this section are expected to be considered as a continuation on the best practices above –and reflected upon as a menu of flexible suggestions for action.

Define purpose of the network (agency and/or support?)

Our research on networks had led us to conclude that it is crucial for all members to agree on, at least, one issue: what is the network for? As mentioned before there are about 6 functions that the networks can carryout. But what must be first decided is what the overall purpose of the network will be. Is this going to be an Agency network or a Support network?

Both are equally important supra functions. An Agency network, however, requires very specific resources that Support networks do not. Failing to agree on it may cripple the Agency network from being able to fulfil its purpose. Similarly, not recognising a Support function can see resources being unnecessarily wasted by attempting to influence policy directly.

Find the right structure for your network

Having defined the functions that networks can play, the next step is to determine the structural characteristics (organisation, skills, resources, etc.), or organizational practices that networks need to follow to be able to achieve their objectives. For instance, what type of membership does a network need to be a successful amplifier? Is it the same as the membership needed for community building? Most likely the answer is no. Amplifiers will benefit from outward looking members, while community builders from inward looking ones. I have already argued that an Agency network has a different basic member-secretariat relationship than a Support network.

Develop and carryout holistic policy influence strategies: strategic opportunism

Not all networks can afford to develop clear (almost step by step) policy influence strategies. Some like CIES have, had the time and resources to do so. Others, like Peru 2021 and Participa Peru work in a rather focused environment that allows them to develop clear approaches. Most networks, however, have to rely on ad-hoc responses to the different and ever changing policy contexts in which they work.

Nonetheless, in all cases it is possible to be successful. Ad-hoc situations do not need to lead to wrong strategy choices. A look at CIES website, for instance, reveals a very diverse set of publication materials, news releases and strategies. They engage with their members through research projects, workshops, and meetings' with the media through new releases and personal and professional relations; and with policy makers with several communication campaigns, ad-hoc publications and policy oriented projects (often in partnership with policymakers themselves).

CONVEAGRO's experience also shows how a response to changing circumstances leads to ad-hoc strategies. A change in the Minister of Agriculture may trigger many positive or negative effects. Events organised at the network which used to be attended by the minister or his advisors might not interest the new minister; hence the weekly visits. Thorough research based evidence of social or economic impact of trade policies might be regarded as less valuable than political pressures at different stages of the 5 years each administration has in government; hence the use of mobilisations and protests to get their message across or draw the attention of policymakers concerned more about the politic of re-election than of policymaking.

These are all ad-hoc responses to changing environments. Their success depends on their strategic nature: They have been planed with the context in mind.

More linear strategies to policy influence like the one of Peru 2021 and Participa Peru are rare. In the case of Peru 2021 this has to do with the fact that they do not target the policy process but rather corporations, which enjoy far greater stability. Their basic sensitising process therefore contains the same elements regardless of the audience. They:

- Present Peru 2021's model on CSR to key officials of interested enterprises
- Explain and describe the basic indicators, actions and benefits from CSR
- Offer examples of successes and 'horror' stories
- Recommend of key organisations that can help them in the development and implementation of CSR strategies

Participa Peru's policy influence process also follows a well defined path. The strategy to influence policies at the law formulation level and shared by all members consists of:

1. Identifying the issues
2. Identify other issues being discussed in Congress and all related legislation
3. Carryout research on the issue
4. Develop a project based on that research's findings
5. Identify key areas to be discussed by the network members
6. Carryout regional workshops to discuss the key issues
7. Develop consolidated proposals
8. Present the proposals to Congress and policymakers; normally through informal networks
9. Carryout lobby or 'cabildeo'

The use of numbers above denotes a step by step process. However, within each step there are a series of non-linear activities that the network needs to deal with in an ad-hoc manner. Its systematic approach to the process, however, allows it to be prepared for most possible variations on their strategy.

What seems to be clearly a good practice in all cases is that the process needs to follow at least four basic steps:

- Understand the context
- Identify the audience and the messenger for the message
- Develop the message
- Communicate the message

These define an overall strategy that needs to be flexible but systematic enough to respond to opportunities: strategic opportunism

Develop living institutional memories

It is important for networks to develop an institutional memory that transcends the individual or member and is held collectively by the network to encourage learning and development. There are many ways and specific tools to do this. Frequent member meetings to discuss new research can be used to discuss policy impact strategies which can be debated and shared among them.

Case studies of successful and unsuccessful policy impact experience are also a useful means for systematic learning. Good case studies can highlight best practices within a sector and context. Unlike academic papers they do not set out to prove or disprove a hypothesis but rather to describe a process allowing the readers to identify what is relevant and not from them.

An after action review is another tool that can be useful to collect key lessons learned after the completion of a project or programme. Peer reviews can highlight issues that might have gone unnoticed by the main actors involved. There are many other tools available in the knowledge management sector but what is important for all is that they must be carried out systematically. The best way of systematizing what is known by the network is to record these events, best practices, failures and successes in a systematic manner.

The Outcome Mapping methodology, developed by the IDRC, is a promising option. The approach is a planning, monitoring and evaluation platform that can be particularly relevant for research policy networks⁶. It promotes the use of journals to monitor the achievement of graduated objectives, the effectiveness of the strategies and the organisation's own performance. These journals, even if not thorough or scientific evaluations, can provide a reliable and credible source of knowledge.

Learning in networks is also about aggregating the knowledge held by the partners. In his book, 'The Wisdom of Crowds', James Surowiecki argues that when a group successfully aggregates its knowledge they can be wiser than any of its wisest members. A simple example: if one was to ask 100 people to guess how many beans there were in a glass jar then the average answer would be closer to the actual number of beans than any of the individual answers; regardless of the individual's intelligence. In the real world this explains the success of betting houses to 'guess' the outcome of a race, exit surveys to 'predict' the outcome of an election, or the FTSE 100 index to

⁶ See: http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

'outperform' (in the long run) the efforts of the smartest stock-brokers. What these have in common is that they successfully aggregate the partial information of many (from millions to a few hundred) different people into a fuller picture of reality. The key point here is that the group is diverse and that all their information is considered.

In a network, members each have partial information about the policy context, possible windows of opportunities, research findings, etc. the value of research networks is that they can potentially bring all the pieces together to develop the full picture.

Strengthen internal relations (member to member)

As a way of learning from the each other but also to strengthen the network it self it is important that members develop good working relations. There is a risk that network secretariats may become a necessary (and only) means of communication with other members. This can clearly hamper their ability to carryout networked research, coordinated policy influence strategies, respond to funding opportunities or take advantage of policy windows. CIES's insistence of networked research is a good way of strengthening intra-network relations. Periodic meetings like those of CONVEAGRO and overlapping thematic and regional forums as in Foro Salud are also good practices.

Some of the social technologies mentioned below can also be used. Net to Net or Net to Phone services for instance can reduce telecommunications costs significantly, blogs can be used to exchange opinions, and many people already use chat services to ask their contacts very specific questions without the typical delays that emails entail.

Develop inter network relations

Although networks find it easier to spin-off other networks, this is a long and sometimes expensive process. Networking or developing relations with other networks can be a profitable alternative. Our conversations with networks in Lima suggest that they enjoy limited links with networks or institutions in other parts of the world or those operating globally. This is unfortunate, mainly because these links could contribute with necessary resources, skills and knowledge, but mostly because these networks also complain of their lack of links with networks in other regions. The Medicam network in Cambodia, for instance, is Foro Salud's natural partner. Although both countries' health systems are in significantly different stages of development, they both suffer from tropical diseases and are emerging from fierce conflicts. The lessons learned in Peru could be highly beneficial for Cambodians (who are, for instance, implementing a health insurance project based on a Chilean equity model) and donor lessons in Cambodia could benefit the Peruvian policy process (from which many donors have withdrawn).

The easiest way of contacting these regional or national networks is via global networks such as the one being developed by the CSPP at the ODI; or the partnerships created by DFID's Development Research Consortiums (DRC). These link Northern based research policy institutions with Southern based ones with the objective of developing policy oriented research on key issues (e.g. migration, chronic poverty, health, etc.).

Integrate consultation with the grassroots and policy influence

Following on a best practice by CONVEAGRO, it is important to keep up with the needs of the grassroots and use this information to guide the development of the message to be conveyed to policymakers. Doing so guarantees that policy recommendations have real and measurable impact on the poor but, almost as important for a network, it strengthens its own credibility before its members as their legitimate representative.

Failing to consider and incorporate their recommendations, concerns and ideas can lead to a weakening of the relations between the members and the network and a threat to its sustainability. Some of the individual members of CIES (remembers that CIES members are organisations), for instance, do not feel represented by them and hardly ever collaborate with their networked initiatives –their expertise is hence lost for the other members. This is in partly due to the fact that CIES relies on its own institutional members' capacity to engage its staff in the network; and from it being such a wide reaching network.

Use new social technologies

Developing strategic opportunistic approaches to policy influence and knowledge management systems is, unfortunately, expensive. For networks that already struggle for the basic resources to run their everyday activities, these recommendations might be difficult to follow. There are, fortunately a great deal of new resources available. The rise and fall of the dotcom ventures has kick-started the development of new (and mostly free) social technologies that are only slowly beginning to be used in the development field. I will not go into much detail here, but for example, Outcome Mapping journals can be kept via a weblog (and online diary); which can also pose as an interactive website and a very effective communications tool. More well known social technologies are e-groups (or d-groups), online newsletters or email discussions.

A great aggregating tool is the wiki technology. Wikipedia is an online open encyclopaedia which allows multiple users from all over the world (anyone with a computer) to contribute to it. You can add, delete edit or link anything you want. Private wikis can allow the members of a network to aggregate their knowledge by contributing to each other's research, opinions or strategies without having to engage in long email chains or costly workshops.

Some of the most popular social technologies available are:

- Weblogs
- The wiki
- Photo Sharing
- On-demand publishing
- e-groups or d-groups
- e-lists
- Online learning platforms
- Net to Net or Net to Phone services (like Skype)
- GIS (Geographic Information Systems)
- Google Earth
- Search engines
- Chat
- RSS

The role of the 'ayayero'

In Latin American Popular music there is always a point in a song when the mood calms down and the tempo slows down to a waltz. After a few moments, when the audience is beginning to get used to the new rhythm, someone, in the crowd or in the band, steps up and shouts: "Ay-ay-ay-ay-ay-ay!" And the music livens up again and people get up on their seats and the dance kicks-off. This is the 'ayayero', in Peru, or 'gritero' (literally, shouter) in Colombia. The 'ayayero' is not just some enthusiastic musician or a publican. S/he has been charged with that responsibility and has had to prepare well of it. Being an 'ayayero' requires not only an excellent understanding of the music it self, but also of the audience and its mood that particular night. They must be able to identify 'amateur ayayeros' in the audience (who will pick up his lead right away); choose the right moment to change the tempo of the music (either prolonging the waltz or cutting it short).

The 'ayayero', however, is not responsible for the chords played after his "Ay-ay-ay-ay-ay-ay!" The songs are usually chosen by the band leader (who is not always the singer) by means of frequent informal conversations with the audience. It is his/her role to encourage them to put forward requests, identify the options and choose them and their order. Band leaders facilitate (or 'facipulate', depending on their own ability to improvise) the process.

The same is true in networks, particularly those that require active participation of their members. Networks, for a proper functioning, need a facilitator but also an 'ayayero'. The 'ayayero's' role is to identify the ebbs in the discussions, the key subjects that members respond to and gather allies to follow up his motivating calls with concrete ideas and proposals. He can, if that is to be his/her role, also act as a facilitator. But the 'ayayero's' main responsibility is to motivate, to wake the members up, to shock them (sometimes) into action (of any sort), to remind them of old promises and ideas that have been quite for a while.

Often, networks rely on their managers to fulfil this role. Network coordinators assume the responsibility to motivate the members and try to liven-up their debates. Unfortunately, both roles require a full-time attention and dedication. The 'ayayero' cannot take his/her eyes off the group; while the coordinator needs to deal with administrative and logistical issues that often happen in the background and away from the members.

Just like in Peruvian popular music, the 'ayayero' could be someone in the secretariat of the network (i.e. in the band) or a member (i.e. in the audience). When setting up a list serve, for example, list managers need to keep a balance between the time they dedicate to safeguarding the technology and motivating and guiding the discussion. This is why most e-mail forums also have a team of moderators –usually located in different parts of the world to guarantee that there will be someone awake enough at any given time. Therefore, a key recommendation to networks is to identify those roles within their members or managers; define the exact extent of their responsibilities and provide them with the necessary resources. A good 'ayayero' can be the difference between an active and ever-growing network and a dying one; or between a hit and a flop.

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Annex 1: Networks Questionnaire

Estudio sobre las funciones que juegan las Redes que buscan informar el proceso político con investigación y evidencia, en el Perú.

Julio - septiembre 2005

Atentamente_

Me dirijo a usted para informarle acerca de un estudio que estamos realizando sobre el rol que juegan las redes en los procesos de políticas de desarrollo internacional. Una parte importante de este trabajo se llevará a cabo en el Perú (otros estudios similares se vienen realizando a nivel global, en África y en Camboya). Espero pueda ayudarnos.

Resulta claro que un mejor uso de la evidencia basada en la investigación que se realice como parte de las políticas y prácticas de desarrollo, puede ayudar a salvar vidas, reducir la pobreza y mejorar la calidad de vida de los más necesitados. Pero, ¿Cómo podemos promover estos vínculos entre evidencia y política? Desde 1999, el programa ‘Research and Policy in Development, [RAPID](#)’ (Investigación y Políticas en Desarrollo) del Overseas Development Institute (ODI) se ha dedicado a estudiar este tema. El programa RAPID ha estudiado la literatura actual y ha desarrollado un marco analítico que describe como distintos factores influyen los procesos políticos. Este marco demuestra que las políticas resultan de la combinación de tres factores claves: el ‘contexto político’; la ‘evidencia; y los’ vínculos’ entre los tomadores de decisiones y otros actores políticos. Adicionalmente, un cuarto factor, las ‘influencias externas’, también es considerado importante. (Para mayor información ver el Documento Informativo adjunto).

El ODI es un Think Tank sobre desarrollo internacional, líder en el Reino Unido. Realizamos investigaciones y asesoramos al Departamento para el Desarrollo Internacional del Reino Unido (DFID), IDRC (Canadá), el Banco Mundial, las Naciones Unidas, la Unión Europea, organizaciones de la sociedad civil a nivel mundial, otros donantes (bilaterales y multilaterales) y gobiernos de países en desarrollo. (Para mayor información, por favor ver: www.odi.org.uk).

El presente trabajo es parte de un programa de 7 años financiado por DFID. El programa, denominado Civil Society Partnerships Programme ([CSPP](#)) tiene como objetivo ayudar y apoyar a organizaciones de la sociedad civil en países en desarrollo a incrementar el impacto que tienen sobre los procesos políticos a favor a los pobres. En el camino, esperamos identificar y establecer alianzas con redes de investigación y política con las cuales trabajar en futuros proyectos o programas y en la promoción de políticas de desarrollo basadas en evidencia a nivel global.

Este cuestionario es una herramienta para conocer qué roles juega [institución] en el proceso político peruano y en el modo en el que utiliza diferentes tipos de evidencia. Tiene como objetivo ofrecer un primer borrador sobre las características organizacionales claves de su red así como identificar posibles buenas prácticas que puedan ser replicadas en otros contextos y situaciones. De ser posible, quisiéramos llevar a cabo un estudio más a fondo de su red, permitiéndonos, a ustedes y a nosotros, aprender qué funciona y qué no funciona en el esfuerzo por influenciar la política en su contexto. Esperamos que las lecciones aprendidas de este estudio y de otros en el Perú y en otras regiones del mundo le ofrezcan a su red una serie de recomendaciones de acción para mejorar su capacidad y probabilidad de informar e influenciar los procesos de políticas a favor de los pobres en el Perú.

Nuestro interés es que este estudio los ayude y, por lo tanto, su colaboración es importante. Pero también somos conscientes que este tipo de estudios a menudo asume que usted tiene tiempo libre - sabemos que tiene muchas otras cosas importantes a hacer. Por lo tanto prometemos, en caso tengamos su consentimiento y sobre la base de la información que nos ofrezca a través de este cuestionario, adaptar nuestro trabajo a sus necesidades y disponibilidad de tiempo. Estamos, por ejemplo, dispuestos a contestar el cuestionario con usted; podemos llamarlo o visitarlo dónde y cuándo usted lo encuentre más conveniente.

Yo voy a estar en Lima entre el 9 y el 26 de agosto realizando una parte de este estudio pero también reuniéndome con organizaciones de la sociedad civil, donantes y el gobierno para identificar, por medio de conversaciones informales, posibles alianzas o colaboraciones futuras. Lorenzo Oimas, desde Lima, me ayudará a coordinar y desarrollar este estudio. Espero que podamos reunirnos para discutir las experiencias de su organización –y con gusto compartir nuestra experiencia en otros países.

Notas sobre el cuestionario:

Usted puede responder las preguntas a su manera. En algunos casos, la respuesta puede ser simplemente "sí" o "no", pero le rogamos que responda las preguntas agregando detalles adicionales o sus propios comentarios. Recuerde por favor que esta no es una evaluación sino una herramienta de aprendizaje. Estamos buscando buenas prácticas que puedan ser compartidas. Puede que algunas de estas preguntas no se apliquen a su organización. Si éste es el caso no les dedique demasiado tiempo e indique simplemente porqué piensa no son aplicables a su caso y continúe con la siguiente pregunta. Si es que usted no tiene acceso a la información exacta, siéntase libre de proporcionar estimaciones o aproximaciones (conjeturas educadas).

Por favor devuelva el cuestionario completo a Enrique Mendizabal por correo electrónico a e.mendizabal@odi.org.uk o por fax al +44 20 7922 0399.

Si tiene alguna pregunta o dificultad es responder el cuestionario no dude en contactarme. Yo estoy dispuesto a llamarlo a su conveniencia y clarificar cualquier duda. Simplemente envíeme un email a e.mendizabal@odi.org.uk – alternativamente mi username en msn es quiquemendizabal@hotmail.com y mi Skype Name es [quiquemendizabal](https://www.skype.com/en/username/quiquemendizabal).

Adicionalmente, pude contactar a Lorenzo Oimas en Lima a loimas@gmail.com o llamándolo al 99589663.

También estaríamos muy agradecidos si pudiese proporcionarnos su nombre, teléfono y correo; en caso de que necesitemos contactarnos con usted para clarificar sus respuestas a las preguntas.

Completado por:	
Posición dentro de la organización:	
Número de teléfono	
Número de fax	
Email	

¡Muchas gracias por su atención!

Sinceramente,

Enrique Mendizabal
Research Officer
Overseas Development Institute, Londres

I. Funciones de la red

La literatura sobre redes⁷ nos sugiere que las redes de investigación y políticas pueden llevar a cabo una serie de funciones. Estas funciones le permiten a estas redes, entre otras cosas, tender un puente entre la investigación y los procesos de políticas. En este sentido, la primera pregunta que nos hacemos es, ¿Cuáles son estas funciones? Nuestras investigaciones sugieren que las redes pueden llevar a cabo por lo menos 6 funciones, no exclusivas:

Filtrar: las redes pueden cumplir una función de filtros de información o conocimiento, ofreciéndoles a sus miembros aquella necesaria para su trabajo o el logro de sus objetivos. Por ejemplo, muchas redes organizan distintas ofertas de trabajo o proyectos de investigación para que sus miembros puedan acceder a aquellas que les son más relevantes.

Amplificar: las redes también pueden cumplir funciones de amplificadores de mensajes, ideas o propuestas concretas. Los medios de prensa por ejemplo, pueden ser vistos de esta manera. Esta función toma un mensaje complejo y privado y lo transforma en uno simple y público. La amplificación se puede hacer a manera de diseminación (en un sentido), comunicación (dos sentidos) o con el objetivo de administrar (normalmente dentro de la red).

Invertir/proveer: la estructura de las redes ofrece la oportunidad de distribuir recursos y capacidades entre los miembros y hacia terceros. Una red, por ejemplo, puede servir como un medio de distribución de becas de investigación a través de concursos. Así mismo, puede ofrecerles a sus miembros cursos y capacitaciones ofrecidas por la secretaría de la red, terceros o por los propios integrantes de la red.

Convocar: la capacidad de convocatoria es probablemente la función más atractiva de una red. Sin embargo, esta función va más allá de la capacidad de reunir a distintos actores en el mismo lugar. Para convocar se requieren capacidades de manejo de información que van más allá de un simple filtro o amplificador. Son necesarias estrategias de comunicación que consideren las necesidades e intereses de distintas audiencias y la habilidad de organizar eventos y programas que respondan a múltiples agendas.

Construir comunidades: probablemente la mas importante función de una red (y al mismo tiempo la menos glamorosa) es la de construir comunidades. Esta función promueve los vínculos fuertes entre los miembros y está relacionada principalmente con redes gremiales o profesionales en las que el objetivo principal es crear comunidades que protejan y amparen a sus miembros.

⁷ Por 'red' entendemos una asociación de personas u organizaciones que comparten valores y objetivos. Para este estudio en particular nos estamos concentrando en redes formales que agrupan a personas u organizaciones que generan o utilizan investigación para influenciar el proceso de políticas sociales en el Perú.

Facilitar: la función facilitadora de las redes se ocupa de ayudar a los miembros a llevar a cabo sus gestiones de una mejor manera. Una función facilitadora, entonces, ofrece acceso a servicios y recursos, abre puertas, vincula a los miembros con personas influyentes, forja acuerdos con otras redes o instituciones, etc.

Las siguientes preguntas nos ayudarán a determinar cuáles de estas funciones lleva a cabo su red. Es posible que realice las seis, algunas con mayor frecuencia que otras.

Funciones			
Basándose en la breve nota sobre funciones arriba, <u>¿Qué funciones cree usted que lleva a cabo su red?</u> (circule las relevantes)	Filtrar Convocar	Amplificar Construir comunidades	Invertir/proveer Facilitar
De las funciones que lleva a cabo, <u>¿Cuál es la MÁS importante –la razón de ser de la red?</u>			
<p>Cuando la red se formó, <u>¿Qué situación se buscaba resolver?</u></p> <p>Por ejemplo, no había suficiente coordinación entre ONGs dedicadas a la salud en el país y la red se diseñó para organizarlas y darles un espacio de debate. O el proceso de políticas mineras no consideraba la situación de las comunidades indígenas y se buscaba informar a los políticos al respecto. Etc.</p>			
<p><u>¿Cuáles son las actividades principales de la red?</u> Por ejemplo:</p> <p>Eventos Becas Administra recursos Coordinación Comunicaciones Capacitación Lobby Maneja otras redes Etc.</p> <p>(Por favor ofrezca una breve descripción de cada uno)</p>			
<p><u>¿Cuál es la principal estrategia que sigue su red cuando busca influenciar cambios en las políticas y prácticas de desarrollo?</u></p> <p>(Por ejemplo, reuniones con políticos, talleres con ONGs, artículos de opinión en diarios, etc.)</p>			

III. Investigación y evidencia

Un aspecto importante de nuestro estudio es comprender el rol que juega la investigación y la evidencia en las estrategias de su red. Por ello, le rogamos nos de unos ejemplos sobre el tipo de productos de investigación que su red genera o utiliza (de terceros). No se preocupe por detallar el contenido de las investigaciones. Lo importante es entender su formato. Por ejemplo, estadísticas demográficas, estudios de caso, ‘papers’ académicos, libros, estudios periodísticos, encuestas de opinión, etc. Igualmente, es importante entender para qué o quién están dirigidos esos productos. Por ejemplo, las estadísticas demográficas pueden estar dirigidas a investigadores y periodistas; los estudios de caso a ONGs y políticos; etc.

Producto de investigación / evidencia	Dirigido a:

IV. Estructura de la red

Esta última sección del cuestionario busca trazar un bosquejo de la estructura de su red. ¿Cómo esta organizada? ¿Cómo funciona? ¿Quién es responsable de que funciones y actividades? Etc. Para ello le vamos a hacer preguntas generales sobre algunos de los factores que son importantes en las redes de investigación y política a nivel mundial. Es importante recordar que esta no es una evaluación sino un proceso de aprendizaje que busca identificar las estrategias que funcionan bien en distintos contextos. Por ello, siéntanse libres de responder todas o sólo algunas de las preguntas en cada sub-categoría.

Entender cómo funciona y está organizada su red nos permitirá hacer la conexión entre estas ‘buenas practicas’ y el apoyo e inversión que son necesarios para lograrlas. Esperamos poder retomar algunas de estas preguntas durante conversaciones con usted y otros miembros de su red. Así que si desea responder estas preguntas en otro momento, no hay problema. Puede usar estas preguntas como una guía para una próxima reunión.

Estructura de la red	
Gobernabilidad <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ¿Cómo esta organizada la red?• ¿Es una red formal o informal?• ¿Quiénes están encargados de las decisiones de corto plazo?• ¿Tiene un concejo directivo?• ¿Tiene una secretaría?• ¿Quién esté encargado de la resolución de conflictos entre miembros?	
Localización, alcance y enfoque <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ¿Dónde se encuentra la red con respecto a sus miembros?	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Existe alguna división de responsabilidades entre los miembros? • ¿En qué nivel del proceso político interviene la red? • ¿En que sector(es) trabaja la red? 	
<p>Capacidades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿La red lleva a cabo investigaciones desde la secretaría o desde los miembros? • ¿Tiene la red capacidad de organizar eventos y/o convocatorias de manera frecuente? • ¿Existe un equipo administrativo adecuadamente preparado? • ¿Qué tan efectiva es la red en el recaudamiento de fondos? • ¿Tiene la red una estrategia de comunicación? 	
<p>Recursos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Tiene la red alguna limitación de recursos humanos? • ¿La infraestructura de la red es la más adecuada para su trabajo? –física/virtual • ¿Qué tan sostenible es el flujo de recursos financieros a la red y a sus miembros? • ¿Cuál es su principal fuente de recursos? 	
<p>Comunicaciones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Tiene la red una estrategia de comunicación? • ¿Quién esta a cargo de esta estrategia? • ¿Existe una estrategia por miembro –o esta completamente centralizada/coordinada desde el centro? • ¿Qué medios de comunicación y/o difusión utiliza la red? • ¿Qué tan conocida e importante es la ‘marca’ de la red? 	
<p>Membresía</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Quiénes son los miembros de la red? ¿Existen grupos muy diversos dentro de la red? • ¿Cómo se obtiene la membresía? ¿Qué tan complicado es hacerse miembro? ¿Ustedes seleccionan a los miembros o ellos pueden acercarse a ustedes a pedir la membresía? • ¿Qué tipo de miembros existen? • ¿Dónde se encuentran los miembros en relación a la secretaría de al red? • ¿Tienen algunos miembros estratégicos? ¿Quiénes? • ¿Qué tipo de relaciones existen entre los miembros –colegas, profesor-/maestro, patrón/cliente? 	
<p>Contexto externo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Diría que el contexto político en el que la red existe hace su trabajo más fácil o difícil? • ¿Hay demanda por investigación entre lo hacedores de políticas en su contexto? ¿Valoran la investigación? • ¿Es fácil acceder a recursos tecnológicos relevantes para el funcionamiento de su red? • ¿Existe una demanda para los servicios/productos de la red? 	
<p>Capacidades estratégicas y de adaptación</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ¿Ha cambiado la estructura de membresía? ¿Qué eventos en el contexto externo han significado mayores problemas para la red?• ¿Qué cambios en la estructura interna de la red han sido particularmente difíciles de afrontar?• ¿Quién toma las decisiones estratégicas de la red? ¿Existe algún proceso pre-determinado o es ad hoc?	
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V. Comentarios finales

Si tiene algún comentario acerca de este cuestionario por favor no dude en hacérselo saber.