COMMUNICATION FOR EMPOWERMENT

GLOBAL REPORT

United Nations Development Programme
Oslo Governance Centre
Democratic Governance Group
Bureau for Development Policy

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ACRONYMS

A2I	-	Access to Information
ANIJ	-	Association of Nepalese Indigenous Nationalities Journalists
ARGP	-	Asia Regional Governance Programme
C4E	-	Communication for Empowerment
C4D	-	Communication for Development
CA	-	Constituent Assembly, Nepal
CDMA	-	Code Division Multiple Access
CFSC	-	Communication for Social Change Consortium
CNLS	-	Comité national de lutte contre le VIH/SIDA, Madagascar
CMC	-	Community Multi-media Centres
CSO	-	Civil Society Organization
GSM	-	Global System for Mobile Communications
HIV/AIDS	-	Human immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
HRBA	-	Human Rights Based Approach
ICCPR	-	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICTs	-	Information and Communication Technology
IPs	-	Indigenous Peoples
IPOs	-	Indigenous Peoples' Organizations
LAO PDR	-	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LDC	-	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	-	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	-	Non Governmental Organizations
NGPES	-	National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy, Lao PDR
NSG	-	National Stakeholder Group
OGC	-	Oslo Governance Centre
RIPP	-	Regional Indigenous Peoples Programme
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNDEF	-	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	-	The United Nations Children's Fund

PREFACE:
A STEP TOWARDS INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

Communication underpins human development because it enables people to access, produce and transfer to others information that is important for their empowerment and progress. Through communication people are able to arrive at their own understanding of issues, to consider and discuss ideas, and to engage in national public debates. Communication thus enables people to negotiate, develop and act on knowledge, and it facilitates the formation of public opinion without which democracy cannot exist.

While being very different types of organizations and working with very different mandates, the *UNDP Oslo Governance Centre* and the *Communication for Social Change Consortium* share an understanding of the importance of communication as a tool and a methodology that can make development strategies more effective, more sustainable, and more pro-poor and gender sensitive.

In the case of UNDP, the recently approved 2008-2013 Strategic Plan recognizes that communication channels are key determinants of *inclusive participation*, which is a key focus for the work of UNDP in the area of democratic governance. The approach is rooted in the knowledge that one of the challenges facing developing countries is the lack of inclusion and participation of poor and vulnerable groups in decisions that impact on their lives.

The Communication for Social Change Consortium fundamentally believes that communication has the power to change societies. Using participatory communication to better understand how commonly held social values and beliefs are nurtured and spread within cultures is a powerful step in helping people decide upon and begin to make the kind of changes they want and need in order to make their lives better.

Said differently, the Consortium helps people get the skills and feel empowered enough to advocate for changes that will make their communities healthier, their countries stronger, and their families more productive. When people come together in dialogue – and to plan and act together – it is the truest form of democracy.

A few years ago, the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre developed a UNDP Guidance Note on *Communication for Empowerment*, drawing upon the expertise of the Communication for Social Change Consortium. The purpose of this Guidance Note was to turn the above general insights into mainstream planning tools that facilitate an understanding of the information and communication needs of poor and marginalized people, hopefully also making this a permanent feature in national development planning processes.

This report is the result of our three year partnership in piloting the Communication for Empowerment approach in five Least Developed Countries. The report presents key learning from the information and communication needs assessments conducted in the five countries, funded by a grant from the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF).

The pilot process offered us a unique opportunity to test the framework and understand how information flows within communities and how the voices of those people who are often not heard or seen are unleashed. The assessments have helped us to widen our own conception of Communication for Empowerment. It has evolved from
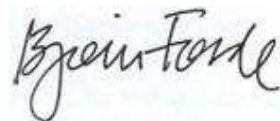
an initial conception as part of UNDP's Access to Information work- primarily geared to meeting the information and communication needs of the people through specific media strategies- to a more rigorous approach that promotes inclusive participation, empowerment of poor and marginalized people and accountability of the state to its citizens.

We hope that this report marks the first step in moving the Communication for Empowerment agenda and the set of recommendations forward, including a revised Communication for Empowerment framework. We suggest that the recommendations included in this report to the UNDEF, will be adopted by various development actors in order to ensure that poor and marginalised people are able to access information and effectively participate and influence decision-making processes.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Communication for Empowerment approach emerges from UNDP Oslo Governance Centre's [OGC] work on Access to Information [A2I] which started in 2002.[1] The Practice Note on Access to Information, produced in 2003, identified four main areas that are critical for promoting access to information for all:

- Strengthening the legal and regulatory environment for freedom and pluralism of information sources;

- Supporting capacity strengthening, networking, and elevation of standards of media at national and local levels to promote the exchange of independent and pluralist information;

- Raising awareness on rights to official information and strengthening mechanisms to provide and access information;

- Strengthening communication mechanisms for vulnerable groups.

In relation to the last area, UNDP recognizes that it is important to create the preconditions for strengthening the voices of poor people in public life. In addition to civic education and building civic skills, strengthening of poor people's voices also requires creation and strengthening of communication mechanisms that enable poor people to participate in and influence national and local government policy and practice. Access to relevant information and communication mechanism is also an essential step in enabling poor people to hold their governments to account.[2]

These above insights inform UNDP's global Communication for Development [C4D] agenda, which emphasis on two-way communication systems, and inclusion and participation of people in decision making processes that affect their lives.[3]

The Communication for Empowerment [C4E] framework was developed and articulated in UNDP's Practical Guidance Note on C4E[4] to develop strategies, particularly with media, to address the information and communication needs of the poor and marginalised groups.

OGC collaborated with Communication for Social Change Consortium [CFSC] during the development of the Guidance Note on C4E, primarily due to the CFSC Consortium's reputation as a leader in this particular area of A2I. Based on the expressed need from country offices for further guidance on how to practically implement C4E approach and the tool presented in the Guidance Note, OGC and the CFSC Consortium partnered together to pilot the C4E approach in five Least Developed Countries [LDC]. Funding was secured from United Nations Democracy Fund [UNDEF] to pilot the C4E approach in Ghana, Madagascar and Mozambique in Africa plus Lao PDR and Nepal in Asia.

The implementation of the C4E approach consisted of [1] information and communication assessments to identify the information and communication needs and identify gaps in meeting those needs; [2] review of the media context based on the existing research at the national level; [3] programme interventions informed by the findings

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[1] UNDP, 'Access to Information Practice Note', Oslo: UNDP/OGC, 2003.

[2] UNDP, Practical Guidance Note, 'Communication for Empowerment: Developing media strategies in support of vulnerable groups', Oslo: UNDP/OGC, 2006.

[3] UNDP, 'Communication for Development: A glimpse at UNDP's practice', Oslo: UNDP/OGC, 2009.

[4] ibid

of the assessment to ensure poor and marginalised groups' participation in decision-making processes.

Experiences and lessons from testing the C4E approach in Madagascar and Mozambique in 2007-2008 enabled further refining of the C4E process and informed the information and communication assessments carried out in Ghana, Lao PDR and Nepal.

The implementation of the two C4E project in Asian countries also differed from the African countries. While the information and communication assessments conducted in the African countries focused on the needs of the marginalised groups in general, the assessments in Asia specifically focused on the needs of the indigenous peoples.[5]

This global report is the initial outcome of the five country C4E pilot project. Its main aim is to:

- Provide an overview of poor people's information and communication needs in the five pilot countries in Africa and Asia;

- Situate C4E within Democratic Governance and specifically in promotion of inclusive participation of poor and marginalised groups through media and other information and communication channels;

- Synthesise key learning from application of the C4E tool in the five pilot countries;

- Recommend ways of strengthening the mechanism to improve adoption and implementation of C4E initiatives in-country.

It is anticipated that the report will contribute to further the C4E work within UNDP, the CFSC Consortium and that of other development actors. In addition, the report is a step towards articulating how UNDP will carry forward its global commitment on promoting Communication for Development. The report is also expected to extend the knowledge base of UN agencies working on Communication for Development issues and identify possible opportunities to complement the work of, and collaborate with, UNESCO, media organizations, civil society organizations, NGOs and other actors in this area.

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[5] The pilots in Lao PDR and Nepal were implemented in partnership with the UNDP Regional centre in Bangkok under the initiative *Indigenous Voices: Communication for Empowerment of Asia's Indigenous Peoples*.

2 ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Access to information and freedom of expression are international human rights norms enshrined in Article 19 of both the UN Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which state that the right to freedom of expression includes not only freedom to 'impart information and ideas of all kinds' but also freedom to 'seek' and 'receive' them 'regardless of frontiers' and in whatever medium. Implementation of these rights are understood as prerequisites for ensuring the voice, participation, transparency and accountability necessary for a democratic society with 'informed debate' viewed as the 'lifeblood of democracies'.[6]

A2I is widely regarded as important for deepening democracy, for a variety of reasons. Government transparency has been advocated as a basic precondition for the ability of citizens to participate in policy deliberations, to cast informed choices at the ballot box, and to hold governing parties, parliamentary representatives and public officials to account for their actions, as well as for the basic principle of promoting freedom of expression and speech.[7] The drive against corruption has also been fundamental in emphasizing the importance of A2I. The implementation of Right to Information legislation is regarded as the best method to reveal cases of official malfeasance and misappropriation.

As indicated above, C4E has been developed within this broad A2I framework which UNDP uses to advance more focused approaches and tools to support broader democratic and human development objectives. Empowerment in this context is understood as the "freedom to act in pursuit of personal goals and well-being."[8] C4E places the information and communication needs and interests of poor people at the centre of media support. It focuses on the capacity and capability of the media to generate and provide the information that marginalised groups want and need and to provide a channel for them to discuss and voice their perspective on the issues that most concern them.[9]

In some countries Communication for Empowerment has evolved further, reflecting greater emphasis placed by a range of national development actors, particularly civil society organizations [CSOs], on the specific process of empowerment.[10]

2.1. C4E – improving democracy and human development

The basic premise underpinning C4E is that independent and pluralist media have a pivotal part to play in deepening democracy and strengthening human development. The Human Development Report (2002) ascribes three crucial roles to free media:

    a.   As a civic forum, giving voice to different parts of society and enabling debate from all viewpoints.

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[6] UNDP, Human Development Report 2002.' Deepening Democracy in a fragmented world' New York: UNDP, 2002.

[7] Burkart Holzner and Leslie Holzner, *Transparency in global change: the vanguard of the open society* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006.

[8] UNDP, Human Development Report 2009. 'Overcoming Barries: Human mobility and development' cites Sen's definition of empowerment in '*Inequality reexamined',*1992.

[9] UNDP, 'Communication for Empowerment' Practical Guidance Note, 2006.

[10] In Asia, the implementation of the C4E project has subsumed the C4E approach within an overall focus to promote inclusive participation and empowerment.

    b.   As a mobilizing agent, facilitating civic engagement among all sectors of society and strengthening channels of public participation.

    c.   As a watchdog, checking abuses of power, increasing government transparency and holding public officials accountable for their actions in the court of public opinion'.[11]

The C4E *approach* aims to ensure that the media have the capacity to contribute to combating the social and political exclusion of poor people and marginalized groups, by generating the information that they want and need, and providing them with appropriate communication channels to participate in public debate in order to discuss and voice views on issues that concern them.

The C4E *tool* functions as an instrumental means of applying the approach by involving poor people directly in identifying and analysing their information and communication needs and in incorporating their views into decisions on how best to meet those needs. The tool uses both participatory and research-based methods and has three core and interlinked elements:

    a.   Information and communication assessments: to understand poor people's information and communication needs and identify gaps where those needs are not being met.

    b.   Review of existing research on the media at national level: to get an overview of the media infrastructure, accessibility and environment in the country, including laws and regulations that guarantee media freedom.

    c.   Programme interventions informed by audit and research findings: these aim to address the identified gaps by increasing access to information for poor and marginalised groups, amplifying their voice through appropriate communication channels and creating spaces for public debate, dialogue and action.[12]

A key assumption underpinning the audits is that poor people need different types of information to meet their specific requirements as well as opportunities to express opinions and preferences on issues that directly impact on their lives. Often the information available to them is inappropriate either in content (it does not reflect their particular reality) or presentation (is not in their local language). Many information systems have been set up to provide information to the poor that are not demand driven, overlook local knowledge, misunderstand the role of intermediaries and do not monitor usage.[13]

The *information audit* is designed to assess the extent to which people are able to access information and come to their own understanding of issues.[14] Information:

"needs to be accessible and understandable to poor people living at the margins of society. It needs to be in a language they can understand and in a form they can access on their own terms. It needs to relate to their personal situations."[15]

Equally important to ascertaining the information needs of poor people is understanding the opportunities they have to share and exchange ideas and communicate their own views. The *communication audit* is intended to determine the extent to which

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[11]   UNDP, Human Development Report, 2002.

[12]   UNDP, 'Communication for Empowerment' Practical Guidance Note, 2006.

[13]   UNDP, 'Access to Information' Practice Note, 2003.

[14]   UNDP, 'Communication for Empowerment' Practical Guidance Note, 2006.

[15]   ibid

views and aspirations (voice) of marginalised groups are heard and reflected in mainstream media, particularly radio, and through community media coverage.

2.2. C4E: profile of the media in global development landscape

Rapidly changing communication environments in many countries, particularly as a result of media liberalisation and new information technologies, together with wider societal changes, have led to a growing information and communication gap between the better off who are able to take advantage of these changes and the disadvantaged and marginalised groups who cannot. Relatively limited analysis of the nature and extent of this information and communication gap has meant that the global development community does not yet have a clear understanding of the development implications of the problem - especially how it affects poor people's participation in formulating development strategies and their ability to hold the state to account.

However, there are some indications that policy makers and development practitioners are increasingly recognising the importance of a free and pluralist media in realising governance and development objectives.[16] Pluralist media refers to presence variety of media outlets (radios, television, newspapers, websites, blog and others) with diverse ownership and viewpoints. A number of factors have converged to raising media's profile as a potentially powerful force in development.[17]

a. **The increasingly networked character of developing country societies:** Increased democratisation, use of communication technologies, rapid liberalisation and proliferation of media together with the emergence of more dynamic civil societies within a globalising world is leading to new opportunities and challenges for using information and communication to empower poor people to participate in social and political life. Opportunities include those provided by the growing citizen media, community media, new social media tools and internet streaming technology. At the same time there is a significant divide between the poor who are unable to take advantage of the new technologies and the better off who can.

b. **The importance of power structure analysis to successful development strategies:** Development discourses such as 'drivers of change' studies, are paying attention to the way vested interests and other political factors affect development interventions. The media's role in reinforcing (i.e controlled by vested interests) or countering this influence is becoming a consideration in the design of effective development strategies.

c. **A balance to direct budget support**[18]**:** In order to balance the direct transfer of funds to a partner country's budget some donors are considering increased funding of CSOs and the media in order that the latter are better able to carry out their watch-dog function vis a vis governments.

d. **A growing communication knowledge network:** This is characterised by a rapid and diverse proliferation of communication initiatives across the developing world, often driven by CSOs and media NGOs. In addition, growing academic interest in the relevance of communication approaches to achieve development has resulted in the increasing institutionalization of the Communication for Development as an academic subject and as an area of research. A number of universities are involved in developing cur-

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[16] BBC World Service Trust, 'Governance and the Media: A survey of public opinion', London: BBC World Service Trust, 2009.

[17] UNDP, 'Communication for Empowerment' Practical Guidance Note, 2006.

[18] BBC World Service Trust, 'Governance and the Media', 2009.

ricula and trainings in this field which has further contributed to enhancing the communication knowledge network in this area.[19]

e. **Documenting experience of what works and demonstrating impact:** Evaluations of recent development experience, particularly of HIV/AIDS initiatives, have led to a reassessment of traditional communication approaches and greater attention paid to participatory communication strategies using various media.

With its strong focus on the media, C4E can contribute to reducing this information and communication gap by supporting relevant media to increase access to information for poor people, provide opportunities and spaces for them to air their concerns in the public arena, to discuss and debate issues between themselves and with others and amplify their voice.[20]

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[19] Some universities that offer degree programmes in C4D include: Ohio University, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA; Malmo University, Sweden; University of Queensland, Australia.

[20] UNDP, 'Communication for Empowerment' Practical Guidance Note, 2006.

3 C4E, INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

There is a general acknowledgement across the international development community that success in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the broader development and governance objectives represented by the Millennium Declaration will be determined in large part by the extent to which there is ownership of national planning and development processes.

Critical factors in achieving ownership of development strategies include informed participation in inclusive public debate together with the ability to hold the state to account for the effective implementation of such strategies. Participating in public debate and holding the government to account is extremely difficult if the media are not informed, engaged and capable of both reaching and reflecting the opinions of the poor, those most affected by development decisions, and exercising their watchdog role.[21] C4E can therefore be regarded as a potentially critical driver for securing the necessary participation, ownership and accountability which are crucial underpinnings of effective democratic governance and human development.

More practically, Communication for Empowerment is closely related to the concept of Communication for Development which was defined in a UN General Assembly Resolution in 1996 as "communication for development stresses the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns and participate in the decisions that relate to their development"[22].

3.1. Participation and accountability – bedrocks of democracy

A number of reasons are commonly advanced as to why participation and social accountability are integral to governance and development processes including:

3.1.1 Participation encourages governments to respond to their citizens' concerns.

'*Citizen participation is at the heart of democracy. Indeed, democracy is unthinkable without the ability of citizens to participate in the governing process. Through their activity citizens in a democracy seek to control who will hold public office and to influence what government does. Political participation provides the mechanism by which citizens can communicate information about their interests, preferences, and needs whilst generating pressure to respond'.[23]*

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[21] UNDP, 'Communication for Empowerment' Practical Guidance Note, 2006. See also UNESCO, 'Media Development Indicators: a framework for assessing media development', 2008, which defines indicators of media development in line with the priority areas of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC): promotion of freedom of expression and media pluralism; development of community media; and human resource development (capacity building of media professionals and institutional capacity building).

[22] UN GA Resolution 51/172.1996. Communication for Development Programmes in the United Nation Systems.

[23] Frank Bliss and Stefan Neuman, 'Participation in International Development Discourse and Practice: "State of the Art" and Challenges', Duisburg: Institute for Development and Peace, University of Duisburg-Essen, 2008 p.11. quote Sidney Verba'a definition of participation in *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* , 1995.

Underpinning the above definition of Sidney Verba, American political scientist and Harvard University professor, is an assumption that participation is an instrumental act which affects how a government responds to people's needs and preferences. It is generally assumed that elected governments are more likely to respond to the more active, better organised and more articulate within society and that their policies are more likely to reflect the preferences of those groups.

Participation processes determine whose voices are heard and amplified and whose are 'muted'. Broader and more equal political participation reflecting society as a whole is considered a prerequisite for more responsive and democratic governance.[24] Though promoting broader participation remains a challenge in established democracies, including in Europe and in the United States of America, promoting participation holds a stronger significance in fragile and new democracies. In those countries with new and often fragile democratic institutions and practices there is a strong likelihood that without opportunities for more equalisation of participation opportunities, central and local government bodies become extremely vulnerable to the interests of the better off and influential in society at the expense of the more vulnerable groups.

Many in the wider development community now recognize the importance of expanding the concept of participation beyond that of participatory development, which has focused largely on the importance of local knowledge and direct participation in the project cycle, to include that of *participatory governance'* which tackles issues such as government accountability, advocacy, awareness raising, rights education and citizen mobilisation.[25]

This reflects a shift towards the related concept of *social accountability* whereby CSOs and citizens act to hold government to account and their actions are supported by a range of other stakeholders including the media.[26] Social accountability mechanisms are intended to complement and reinforce formal accountability systems.[27] A distinguishing feature of social accountability, unlike other vertical accountability mechanisms such as elections, is that it can be exercised in a continuous basis, for example through a variety of media and communication channels.[28]

This move towards participatory governance and social accountability captures the notion of active citizenship as 'a set of practices (juridical, political, economic or cultural) which define a person as a competent member of society and which as a consequence shape the flow of resources to persons and social groups'.[29]

3.1.2. Social accountability and participation are at the heart of a human rights based approach to development (HRBA)

Social accountability can be seen as making operational a number of the key principles which are at the core of a human rights based approach to development. Under a HRBA rights holders (citizens) can hold duty bearers (government and other service providers) to account for their commitments using national and international legisla-

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[24] UNDP, Democratic Governance Strategic Initiatives (unpublished draft paper, 2007).

[25] John Gaventa, 'Towards Participatory Local Governance: Assessing the Transformative Possibilities' p.3 prepared for conference on 'Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation' Manchester, 27 – 28 February, 2003.

[26] UNDP, Fostering Social Accountability: A guidance note, (draft, 2010).

[27] ibid

[28] ibid

[29] Sam Hickey and Giles Mohan, 'Relocating participation within a radical politics of development: citizenship and critical modernism', *Development and Change*, Vol.36 (2) Oxford: Institute of Social Studies, 2005, Pg.11, cites Turner's definition of citizenship in *Citizenship and Social Theory.*

tion. Many poor groups are unable to use formal mechanisms such as the courts and therefore other measures such as protests, lobbying, public and political campaigns become extremely important means in helping to strengthen the accountability of states to their poorer citizens. Strengthening access to information and promoting an independent media are important practices for enhancing social accountability.[30]

It can also be argued that in a human rights based approach to development citizens as rights holders can only make valid claims on the state and other duty bearers if they become engaged in the decisions and processes that affect their lives.[31] The UNDP Human Development Report 2000 on Human Rights and Human Development argues that elections are not enough and that new ways must be found to 'secure economic, social and cultural rights for the most deprived and to ensure their participation in decision-making'.[32] Some argue that the right to participate should be considered a 'prior right' and a prerequisite for the realisation of other rights.[33]

3.1.3. Participation can enhance the skills and competencies of citizens

Participation has the potential to be a powerful transformative force through the process of gaining ordinary people's interest and encouraging their participation and developing their confidence and capabilities.[34] A key question is the extent to which participation through various channels including the media enables people to engage actively beyond specific, often discrete, interventions into a broad range of arenas and progressively change the underlying causes of exclusion that exist within communities and which' govern the opportunities for individuals and groups to claim citizenship'.[35]

3.2. UNDP and Communication for Empowerment

Since the introduction of the practice architecture in the late 1990s UNDP has sought to promote enhanced participation in all areas of its work. In its current strategic plan[36] UNDP identifies fostering inclusive participation to embrace the most disadvantaged groups in society as a key plank of its democratic governance work in general and, more specifically, its Access to Information/Communication for Empowerment activities. In so doing UNDP is in line with other development actors who are paying increased attention to the media in their policy and strategic documentation.[37]

The organization aims to support government and development partners in developing appropriate interventions aimed at increasing the participation of the poorest people in society as well as marginalised groups such as women, people with disabilities and indigenous people. The strategy acknowledges that low civic participation raises questions over a government's legitimacy and therefore places priority

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[30] UNDP, 'Fostering Social Accountability: A guidance note' (draft 2010).

[31] John Gaventa in 'Towards Participatory Local Governance', page 5 cites DFID's Realizing Human Rights for Poor People, 2000.

[32] ibid

[33] ibid

[34] Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, p.43.

[35] Sam Hickey and Giles Mohan, 'Relocating participation within a radical politics of development: citizenship and critical modernism', 2005.

[36] UNDP, Strategic Plan 2008 -2011: Accelerating global progress on human development, 2008.

[37] BBC World Service Trust, 'Governance and the Media', 2009

on the mobilisation of socially vulnerable groups as a 'basic foundation for strengthening their access to the policymaking process.'[38]

Increased access to and participation in decision making process is critical for people to be able to hold their governments and government institutions to account. Thus, the Communication for Empowerment approach can be viewed as a social accountability approach, as it aims to harness media to provide necessary information to and establish communication channels to enhance participation of poor and marginalized groups and thereby combat their social and political exclusion.

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[38] ibid

4 KEY LEARNING FROM APPLICATION OF THE C4E TOOL IN 5 COUNTRIES

The pilot studies indicate that the C4E tool is a flexible instrument which can be adjusted to reflect particular national circumstances. In addition to placing poor people at the centre of the process the C4E mechanism has enabled involvement by a range of development actors including government, media, research organizations and civil society organisations.

Analysis of the findings point to the C4E tool being an effective means of identifying the range of information poor people want and need and suggesting how various media can enhance provision of that information. It also is a very useful tool to assess the communication channels available. Importantly, the analysis also indicates that in most countries, primarily due to lack of confidence and capacity, poor people do not yet use the media to any great extent to exchange information, communicate their views or participate in public dialogue. Rather, they continue to rely on traditional communication forums such as village meetings and the market place.

The findings from the studies suggest important linkages between information and communication and delivery of public services/livelihoods/development and provide a basis for considering strategic options on the way forward in a range of sectors including HIV/AIDS and health.

Step by step guidelines on applying the C4E tool have evolved during the course of the pilot studies which may be of benefit to other countries seeking to promote more inclusive governance and development processes. Factors viewed as supporting the implementation of the C4E tool in-country include linking the assessment and research to existing civil society strengthening and information projects, and grass-roots initiatives; building on existing dialogue processes at local and national level, a committed UNDP country team and strong support from UNDP's regional offices.

The C4E approach was conceived to improve the capacity of the media to meet information and communication needs of poor people and marginalised groups. The research findings indicate that promoting and improving the capabilities of inclusive media, such as community radio, may not be sufficient to enable poor people to use and participate in these communication channels. The results of the pilots suggest that the C4E tool either needs to make provision to include more specific support for citizen empowerment, for example using local NGOs, CBOs or other intermediaries to develop interactive programme formats and reporting styles to help poor groups use the media, or be linked more directly to civic education initiatives.

A stock taking of research findings from each of the five pilot studies reveal a number of themes/issues that are common to more than one pilot country. While some highlight emerging trends and others reinforce existing learning and challenges, all have important implications for the third pillar of the communication for empowerment tool – designing appropriate programme interventions to fill information and communication gaps. They include:

a. The dominant role of radio, particularly community radio, as an information medium and potentially a strong communication channel for poor people;

b. the limited confidence and capacity of many poor people to use media to communicate;

c. the importance of mixing traditional and new information technologies in strategies designed to improve democratic governance and reduce poverty;

d. the importance of a safe public space in providing support and expanding opportunities for communication and participation in decision-making process;

e. the growing importance of mobile telephony;

f. the importance of a supportive legal and regulatory environment for the media;

g. differential access to the media by men and women.

4.1. Dominance of radio as an information medium for poor people

Perhaps not surprisingly the studies in each country confirmed the continued pre-eminence of radio as the medium of choice for poor people to access information. Several reasons were cited for this preference including: the relatively low cost of radios and the easy availability of radios and batteries in the market place[39]; broadcasting in local languages and a high degree of trust in the content. In some localities with access to community radio and/or FM stations two-way communication through participative radio programmes was cited as a key factor.

Community radio meets the accessibility and appropriateness criteria regarded by many as essential if communication technologies are to contribute to poverty eradication but findings from Ghana, Lao PDR and Mozambique indicate concerns over sustainability of this medium.[40] Problems raised included lack of funds to make programmes and replace equipment, limited programming and reporting skills of journalists and at times complex relationships with local authorities. The Nepal study also highlighted the importance of investing in the capacity of journalists to report on issues impartially and professionally. This is critical for ensuring trust in media, particularly in fragile state contexts.

4.2. Limited confidence and capacity of poor people to use media to communicate and participate in public life

Most of the country reports highlight low levels of literacy and limited confidence and skills as a significant barrier to poor people using media to participate more fully in community and public life. Though the research indicated that community radios in Ada, Ghana; Khoun, Lao PDR; and Dondo, Mozambique provide familiar and trusted community space for participation, the research also highlighted that even when communication mechanisms are available the possibility for engagement cannot be taken for granted (specifically highlighted in the Nepal report).

More attention needs to be given to creating the pre-conditions of voice through raising awareness and building confidence and capacity to speak out. This point is explicitly made in both Nepal and Madagascar reports and is well articulated in the Madagascar report which states 'radio alone is not able to effect long term change in

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[39] Respondents in Madagascar, Mozambique and Ghana mentioned that the cost of replacing batteries was an important item in the household budget.

[40] Participants at the 5th UN Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development (1995) identified accessibility, appropriateness and sustainability as three essential criteria for communication technologies to contribute successfully to poverty eradication cited in 'Overview of UN Inter-Agency Round Tables on Communication for Development', 2009.

people's attitudes and practices and needs to be accompanied by face to face support and training'.

Most of the pilot studies suggest ways of improving the ability of poor people to use media. Recommendations from Madagascar include the establishment of facilitated village listening groups to help villagers listen actively to programmes and then discuss and debate issues raised in those programmes. These groups can also be used for developing action plans to address key issues facing the community. In Lao PDR, where the government plans to make increasing use of the Internet to deliver development information and promote growth, the pilot study recommends the use of development intermediaries[41] ('infomediaries') as an essential link between poor rural communities and information delivered across the internet. The Ghana pilot also advocates the use of communication practices such as participatory theatre/theatre debates to build confidence and help disadvantaged groups participate more effectively.

4.3. Merging traditional and new communication channels

The analysis of the data confirms the paramount importance to poorer groups of traditional communication mechanisms and suggests that new information and communication technologies should not supplant traditional information channels such as village and church meetings. The assessment in Ghana proves that traditional information channels are relevant in both urban and rural areas. Rather any communication strategy should strive to reflect the best 'mix and match' of new and traditional technologies to meet the needs of local people.

Traditional and religious leaders are held in high esteem by Ghanaian society. Research in Ada, one of the research locations in Ghana, found that the Chiefs had adopted community radio as a new tool to help them carry out their traditional leadership role. They saw it as a stronger 'megaphone' to help them get closer to local people. The Lao PDR study highlights the need to consider a wide spectrum of communication channels to promote development throughout the country. It makes clear that in some circumstances loud speakers will be cost effective short range information channel, till proper radio coverage is set up.

4.4. The importance of public spaces in promoting two way communication

A number of the reports mention the importance of a safe public place for poor people to come together to discuss issues. Such spaces are especially important for helping to overcome the relative isolation of poor women by bringing them out of their domestic confinement.

A high priority is placed on face to face communication by people in all pilot countries. This point was raised by respondents in the three research locations in Ghana. Residents of Bonsaaso, the most remote area, complained that the lack of such a space was a demotivating factor in organising meetings. In the urban suburb of Nima women in the Mothers' Club place a high value on the physical space of their office which "has brought us together closely".

In Ada community radio was seen by some as providing a virtual space for the community to come together. In Mozambique over 80 percent of those interviewed said they use meetings in churches, schools and other public places to discuss issues

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[41] These could be NGOs/CBOs, teachers, health workers, agricultural extension workers or radio broadcasters.

of general interest to the community. Priorities to emerge from a meeting held to analyse the rural communication system in Lao PDR included the need to establish information centres at all levels. The Madagascar study recommends a network of regional communication centres to support local communication initiatives.

4.5. The growing importance of mobile telephony

Mobile telephony is growing fast in all pilot countries and the extent of usage varies from country to country. Access to mobile telephones is the highest in rural Nepal. Increasing competition within the sector is likely to encourage further expansion into rural and more remote areas and reduce the cost of handsets making them more accessible to poor people.

In Ghana the use of mobile phones is now common place in many parts of the country. Importantly, there is increasing interaction and synergy between mobile telephony and radio [both FM and community radio stations] as a growing number of people use their mobiles to have their say on various 'call-in' radio programmes. Amongst the most popular programmes are those where local politicians and government officials explain/defend their policies to local people who are encouraged to call in with questions/comments. These types of call-in programmes provide opportunities for ordinary people to engage in governance and development processes.

The link between radio and mobile telephony is also evident in call-in programmes on Khoun community radio in Lao PDR where calls from mobile phones account for the majority of the high volume of calls to the station. To overcome current access problems in remote areas of Lao PDR and Madagascar recommendations from the studies include establishing mobile phone access points in villages/communities to link to specific community/FM radio programmes.

While mobile phone networks covered the three research sites in Mozambique survey findings indicate that for most respondents the technology has not yet become an important communication mechanism for them. The studies suggest that integrating mobile and FM/community radio in this way offers significant potential for enhancing two way communication.

4.6. Importance of supportive legal and regulatory environment for the media

Most of the pilot studies highlight the importance of a supportive legal and regulatory environment to sustain a pluralist and professional media capable of using communication as an empowerment tool. Legal and regulatory frameworks that protect and enhance community media are especially critical for ensuring vulnerable groups' freedom of expressions and access to information. Media in some of the pilot countries face particular challenges such as strict libel laws to curb media critics. Of the five pilot countries only Nepal has a Freedom of Information Law and a National Information Commission, although a Right to Information Bill is awaiting ratification by the Ghanaian parliament.

4.7. Differential access to the media by women and men/Gender and the media

Who decides which programmes to listen to within the household differs from country to country. The Mozambique and Madagascar studies suggest that although the radio is generally owned by men all family members can decide whether to turn on the

radio and what to listen to. In Mozambique radio is listened to mostly by women as men are often working outside the home.

The Ghana study suggests a correlation between gender, literacy and the media [radio]. It points to a significant literacy divide between men and women with a large percentage of women in the three pilot areas having no formal education. Radio, TV and other communication tools, invariably owned by men, are associated with literacy, status and power. Research findings from all three Ghanaian communities indicate that women have limited control over access to and use of radio with men taking decisions on which programmes to listen to and when to listen. Interviews with local community groups and individuals suggest that Ghanaian women's relative distance from radio and other communication sources can also be attributed to their traditional roles of raising children, taking care of the family and trading.

5 THE WAY AHEAD

The pilots confirm that C4E has the potential to be a significant driver for increasing citizen participation in policy formulation and in broader governance and development processes. It is important that priority is now given to refining the C4E approach and strengthening the tool in line with the findings from the pilot studies.

Recommendations:

5.1. Revised Communication for Empowerment framework

Use the pilot project to produce a revised framework for the C4E approach and tool which balances support to the media with greater emphasis on creating the preconditions for voice through citizen empowerment. A revised framework would also incorporate a more explicit gender dimension and provide more guidance to addressing gender-related issues at local level. The framework should analyse and identify opportunities for promoting stronger national ownership of the C4E approach. It would also make provision to include more specific support to empower citizens to use media, or be linked more directly to civic education initiatives.

5.2. Role of UNDP in promoting C4E

Use UNDP regional governance teams to promote (a) better understanding of C4E among UNDP country offices, governments, the media and CSOs, (b) the inclusion of C4E in national programmes, including media, A2I and information and communication technologies (c) the provision of relevant support to media and CSOs directly involved in C4E processes, including through potentially facilitating establishment of national platforms on C4E (d) support regional community of C4E practitioners to serve as key resource persons at country level

5.3. Collaboration between various development actors to address identified gaps

Promote and coordinate effective linkages with other organizations(including for example local NGOs, CBOs and other intermediaries) working on information and communication specifically to consider how emerging issues and challenges identified during the project might best be addressed. For instance, how to promote community media in the long term? How best to merge traditional and new communication channels to meet the needs of poor people? How to develop interactive programme formats or reporting styles? Or how to promote innovative use of technologies that would provide cost-effective services to poor and marginalized?

6 PILOT PROJECTS IN GHANA, MADAGASCAR, MOZAMBIQUE, LAO PDR AND NEPAL

UNDP's Oslo Governance Centre identified the Communication for Social Change Consortium as its implementing partner for the pilot project in five countries. The methodology used was broadly similar in all countries but adapted to meet particular national circumstances.

6.1. Research

A mix of qualitative and quantitative survey methods were adopted to suit the specific national contexts including:

- Household Surveys in three pilot locations
- Key informant interviews
- Focus group discussions with village leaders, local government officials, media representatives, NGOs and CBOs
- Observation by researchers in pilot locations
- Review of selected existing research and national information data bases
- Consultations/dialogue with key stakeholders at national level

Agreed criteria, adapted to the national context, guided the selection of three research sites in each country to carry out the information and communication surveys. Core criteria included the presence of poor and disadvantaged people, the rural/urban divide and different ethnic and religious groups. The majority of the five country pilots applied a control approach to media with selected locations reflecting both good and poor access to media, particularly community radio.

Within the local research areas a simple random sampling method was used to select households for interview. While the information collected from the research sites in each country cannot be said to be representative of the country at large strategic options inferred from the findings may have national applicability.

In each country an experienced national consultant was identified by UNDP and CFSC to lead the research, analyse findings and produce the country report. The two Asian studies form part of the UNDP Asia regional project 'indigenous voices: communication for empowerment of Asia's indigenous peoples'. They were conducted jointly by the Regional Indigenous Peoples Programme (RIPP) and UNDP's Asia Regional Governance Programme in collaboration with the UNDP country offices in Lao PDR and Nepal.

Research at local level was overseen by the national consultant and conducted either by experienced researchers or by people familiar with the area who received training on administering the household questionnaire and conducting interviews. The research team spent a maximum of three days in each of the three research sites. In most countries the analysis of local level findings was validated and supplemented by a review of selected national reports and information bases as well as interviews with key stakeholders at national level.

6.2. Establishment of a National Stakeholders Group

It was envisaged that in the early stages of the audit process UNDP country offices would facilitate the formation of a national stakeholders groups (NSG) comprising representatives from government, multilateral and bilateral organisations, CSOs and the media. The role of the NSG was to oversee the conduct of the research, validate the findings and take a leading role in steering the follow up to the research recommendations. The practice differed from country to country. In Madagascar a NSG was formed at the outset of the research process whereas in Mozambique the decision was taken after the research had been completed that the Joint UN programme steering committee would act as the NSG. In Ghana and Lao PDR the NSG has been used to validate the research.

6.3. An iterative process rather than a template approach

The Ghana, Lao PDR and Nepal studies carried out in 2009 were informed by experiences from the earlier pilots conducted in Madagascar and Mozambique in 2007/2008. A review of the process in Mozambique and Madagascar resulted in some adjustments to the communication component of the household questionnaire as well as recognition of the need to supplement questionnaire findings with more focus group discussions at local and national levels together with more extensive research at the national level. The iterative process was further reflected in the final study in Nepal where a plan detailing research requirements at local and national levels was a key output from a training workshop at the beginning of the audit process.

A MOZAMBIQUE

1. Research

Research was carried out in Dondo District in Sofala province in the central region, Monapo district in Nampula province in the most northern region of Mozambique and in Mandlakazi district in the southern province of Gaza. Dondo and Monapo district towns host Community Multimedia Centres (CMCs) The three districts were selected in line with pre-existing criteria – maintaining a balance between areas close to and far from urban centres; the presence or absence of donors and community radio stations.

2. Findings on Access to Information

2.1. Access to the media

Over the last 15 years Mozambique has gained significant experience in using media, particularly radio, as a development tool. This is reflected in the study's findings as interviewees in the three districts expressed a clear preference for radio as a means of receiving and sharing information and, where possible, entering into dialogue on development issues. The findings revealed a 'general belief' that the media addresses the concerns of the people.   A majority of respondents in all three districts said that they did not believe what they hear until it has been covered either on the radio, television or newspapers.

A difference in the level of satisfaction in accessing information was found between the two districts with community radio (Dondo and Monapo) and Mandlakazi. While most respondents in Dondo and Monapo were reasonably pleased with their access to information most of those interviewed in Mandlakazi indicated dissatisfaction with what they perceived as limited information on what was happening in their own district. Findings suggest that a significant proportion of people in all three districts believe that journalists prefer to listen to community leaders and do not always represent the interests or provide a voice for the most vulnerable groups.

2.2. Radio

In Dondo and Monapo most people have access to the radio. All respondents in these centres said that they had used community radio either as a source of information or entertainment. In Mandlakazi the main source of radio broadcasting is the provincial broadcaster of Radio Mozambique in Gaza. In all three districts radio was the preferred medium of accessing information. Respondents cited the following reasons:

- The relatively low cost of radios and their availability in the local market place
- Programmes broadcast in easily understandable local languages. This is also the case in Mandlakazi[42]where Radio Mozambique is broadcast through provincial stations in Changana language.
- Local issues of direct relevance to the life and culture of communities are discussed on community radio stations in Dondo and Monapo.

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[42]   Mandlakazi does not have a community multimedia centre (CMC).

- The possibility for communities to participate directly in local radio pro-grammes by means of telephone calls or via SMS messages sent from mobile phones

Interviews with community and religious leaders together with representatives of grassroots organizationsconfirmed that all but the poorest families owned a battery-operated radio. Most interviewees in the three districts said that they prioritised replacement batteries in the family budget. Respondents were unfamiliar with wind up or solar powered radios which are unavailable in the market.

Although news broadcasts attract large audiences respondents in each of the three districts said that entertainment, particularly music, programmes were those they most enjoyed listening to. Interviews in Monapo and Dondo confirmed that local people are very much at ease in expressing their views and concerns on community radio. They place a high value on this medium which is staffed by local people who are familiar with the way of life in the community.

Discussions with community radio coordinators in Dondo and Monapo revealed that community radio in Mozambique is regarded primarily as a development tool with priority given to educational and social issues/ events taking place in the communities. Respondents indicated that they would like to see greater coverage given to a range of topics on community radio and other media outlets. These included health, combating HIV/AIDS, civic education, combating corruption, agriculture/market prices, environmental protection and small business development. Some NGOs encourage Radio Mozambique and the community radio stations to produce pro-grammes which tackle specifically the interests of vulnerable groups by covering all associated costs including air time and travel for journalists to local communities.

2.3. Television

Despite the fact that all three districts can receive at least one national television station the level of access to television within communities is low due to:

- The high cost of television. At almost four times the national monthly minimum wage TV is beyond the reach of most low-income families.
- Many homes in rural areas do not have electricity
- Low capacity of transmitters results in poor reception in the districts

All the districts have public spaces where it is possible for people to go to watch TV programmes or videos. However, in some instances an entrance fee is charged or in the case of restaurants and bars, viewers are expected to purchase food and drink. This effectively denies access to poorer groups in society.

2.4. Newspapers

Very few respondents from the three districts said that they regularly read a newspaper. This is due to a number of mutually reinforcing factors including:

- High levels of illiteracy
- Few people have a habit of reading
- The relatively high cost of newspapers puts them beyond the reach of poorer groups
- the lack of coverage of local issues of direct relevance to people living in the districts
- poor distribution of newspapers by media companies throughout the country

2.5. Access to other media

The three research districts access the internet through mobile phone networks. Of those interviewed only two people from Dondo, one person from Monapo and no one from Mandlakazi had ever used the internet. The low usage and limited access is due to various factors including low levels of literacy and IT skills, relatively high installation and communication costs, sparsely populated communities making costs of maintaining an internet service uneconomical and inadequate networks. Nonetheless, access to the internet is increasing across the country due to the expansion of broadband services and mobile internet provided by mobile telephone operators. With expansion the cost of accessing the internet is reduced.

2.6. Access to information through traditional local sources

Traditional forms of accessing information and communicating particularly face to face at social or religious occasions, village meetings and meetings with government bodies, remain very important for local people. In Mandlakazi district all of the people interviewed said that 'interpersonal' communication is their principal means of circulating messages. They report that they receive information and communicate with others on local issues in a variety of ways including using personal contact or mobile phones, SMS; meetings with community leaders, agricultural extension agents, staff from community based organisations; at church. Almost two thirds of those interviewed reported that a message passed from person to person can be modified in the process and often does not reach the intended recipient 'intact'.

3. Communication

Community radio programmes in Dondo and Monapo are structured to give people the opportunity to express their views in public. Radio producers at these stations are volunteers from the community and are able to represent the concerns of the community. Respondents reported that issues raised and courses of action proposed by members of the public are often subsequently covered by both community radio stations and the provincial station of Radio Mozambique in the form of reports or debates which include members of the public represented by leaders from communities and grass root organisations. Importantly, although respondents believed that most women were aware of specific 'call-in' programmes, a number of women interviewees felt they would neither have the confidence to participate in such programmes nor to speak in public in traditional forums such as village or grass root meetings.

Some of those interviewed commented on the lack of knowledge and capacity of community radio journalists and producers. Specific concerns raised included poor command of local languages and a lack of depth in the way subjects are approached. The radio coordinators shared these concerns and attributed them to lack of opportunities for journalist training, lack of financial support to travel to local communities and to ensure sustainability and the constant evolution of local languages resulting in a loss of 'purity' of usage particularly among young people.

4. Recommendations

4.1. National level

Key recommendations from the study included the creation of a national programme to (i) strengthen existing media, particularly community radio; (ii) support the

development of a clear legal framework for community radio and (iii) establish community media in areas of the country where they do not yet exist.

4.2. Dondo, Monapo and Mandlakazi districts:

Specific recommendations included:

- securing additional financial resources and strengthening the technical capacity of the community radio stations and the national community radio forum, FORCOM
- ensuring more coverage of local issues by Radio Mozambique's provincial broadcaster
- establishing a community radio station in Mandlakazi
- ensuring that all media pay more attention to the specific needs of the most marginalised communities which as yet have not been met to any great extent
- deepening the involvement of churches and grass roots organizationand promoting these institutions as public spaces for communities to discuss and debate issues important to them
- improving communities' access to newspapers and televisions.

B MADAGASCAR

1. Research

Research was conducted in Antsirabe, Moramanga and Tsiroanomandidy districts in the central part of Northern Madagascar, relatively close to the capital Antananarivo. The short timeframe to carry out the research together with a limited budget were key factors in determining district selection. Criteria for selecting communes within districts (one in each of Antsirabe and Tsiroanomandidy) and two in Moramanga) included (i) good and poor access to media and (ii) the presence of poor and vulnerable people.

2. Findings on Access to Information

2.1. Access to the media

Over two thirds of respondents felt that access to information had improved over the last decade. The study attributes improvement in access to information to a number of factors including (a) an 'explosion' of new FM stations which have been set up across the country over the last decade; (b) development initiatives such the World Bank funded national HIV/AIDS awareness campaign which has distributed approximately 10,000 wind-up solar radios throughout the 22 regions of the country and 'catalysed' local listening groups to consider and discuss information and (c) a government administration with a strong interest in media.[43] The increase in media has improved news coverage and three quarters of those interviewed attached great importance to this coverage. Interviewees felt that the media provided balanced views on issues indicating a significant degree of confidence in the sector.

2.2. Radio

90 per cent of respondents cited radio as their primary source of information indicating that radio has the potential to be a powerful agent in shaping opinion. Distribution of wind-up/solar powered radios to village listening groups by the CNLS[44], UNICEF and NGOs together with the availability of cheap transistors form China has facilitated increased access to radio.

Almost half of those interviewed stated that men in their family owned a radio while 29 per cent said that women owned a radio. Approximately half of interviewees thought radio provided the most reliable information believing it to be factual and not based on rumour. Almost all respondents felt that radio could help improve their lives but they were almost equally divided over whether national or local radio was more effective in delivering relevant programmes. Only half of respondents felt they could easily afford the cost of batteries/electricity to use the radio. They also mentioned that an irregular and an inefficient supply of electricity interfered with regular listening.

Radio listening groups, where people can discuss and debate information and agree practical action, are an important element of development projects in Madagascar where a strong oral tradition still exists. The study refers to surveys conducted in

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[43] The study was conducted prior to the change of government in early 2009.

[44] Comite National pour la Lutte Contre le SIDA/National HIV/AIDS Committee.

the south of the country which confirm that non-members of listening groups also benefit from information broadcast over the radio as it is shared and discussed in traditional meetings and by word of mount within local communities.[45]

The study draws on recent research carried out in other areas of Madagascar to corroborate the findings from this relatively small sample and to expand understanding of how radio is used elsewhere in the country. One paper examined the effectiveness of radio improving governance and indicated a direct correlation between the availability of information through local media and local people's ability to monitor the distribution of government funds intended for local schools.[46]

Another study examined the differences between villages with and without access to radio in the Androy region and concluded that the presence of radio positively affected the lives of people in rural Madagascar.[47] Of particular note are rising levels of women's confidence and knowledge with increased access to radio.

Apart from news coverage most interviewees felt that much of the information essential to improving their daily lives was not broadcast. They listed the need for more information on the following areas in descending order of importance agriculture and markets, health, local services, employment, corruption and the state and government. Limited professional capacity and resources at local level mean that most programmes are made in the capital and either rebroadcast through local FM stations or read from transcripts through the same medium.

2.3. Television

There is significant interest in developing regional TV and some provinces have either developed local programming for national broadcasts or have privately owned TV stations covering local issues. However, the cost of a television makes it beyond the reach of all but the wealthiest households. Irregular electricity supplies outside the urban areas is also a major factor inhibiting ownership as purchasing fuel for generators is not a viable option for most rural families. Nonetheless, 11 per cent of respondents indicated that they are able to access TV in a public meeting place in the village.

Video clubs and cinemobiles are currently the more accessible means for showing audio visual material to people living within the country and a number of development agencies are using these to increase awareness and knowledge on issues such as HIV/AIDS and other health issues.

2.4. Internet

The internet is mostly available in urban centres. The government's telecentre initiative, launched in 2003, resulted in the opening of internet centres in several provincial towns. This initiative together with improved telephone connectivity and, more recently, competition within the sector has helped to improve the performance of service providers and increased choice and access for those who have the means and skills.

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[45] The study cites Smith,R. 2000 and Vadgama,J.2006

[46] Francken, Minton, Swinnen, *Listen to the Radio! Media and Corruption: Evidence from Madagascar,* Cornell University/World Bank, 2005. This research notes that '*the impact of local radio access on reducing capture is more important when illiteracy is more widespread: overall results indicated that corruption can be successfully contained.*'

[47] Findings included: women's levels of knowledge on issues related to poverty reduction rising with increased access to radio broadcasts and changes; changing behaviour patterns e.g. in relation to child vaccinations and fuel efficient stoves and increased confidence to 'give answers and not automatically declare ignorance'.

However, poorer groups lack the literary and IT skills to use these centres. The majority of respondents in this study indicated they had no access to internet and only a small number mentioned its availability in their locality.

2.5. Print Media

Low levels of literacy within the rural population together with poor distribution of newspapers outside major urban centres limits the potential of the print media as an empowerment tool. This is reflected in the findings where less than 7 percent of those interviewed cited newspapers as a primary source of information. Only a very small minority of respondents, 8 percent, said that they read a newspaper more than once a week and many reported that newspapers were not available.

2.6. Access to information though local sources

The study indicates that people access information through a number of local and traditional sources including village meetings, elders, NGOs, local authorities and pastors. One of the main traditional sources of information is the village meeting at which problems and issues of daily life are discussed. Although many respondents in the needs assessment ranked radio as the principal source of information they also said that village meetings and meetings with elders were important in providing detailed and practical advice on important local issues. For many respondents the marketplace is another important traditional venue for exchanging information and receiving news. Its important role in transmitting information and providing a forum for discussion was highlighted in focus group discussions with local leaders.

Discussions with respondents revealed that NGOs have an important role as information sources. In one commune (Beforona) 90 percent of people interviewed said that NGOs helped them gain access to required information. In the other communes more than half of the respondents said that information from NGOs was very useful. NGOs use a variety of media including video and radio to provide information and introduce issue to poor communities. They then follow-up with face to face meetings with villagers in which they answer questions, facilitate discussions and debate.

3. Communication

Findings suggest that the media does not yet play a substantial role in amplifying the voice of poor people. For the majority of the population the main channels for expressing opinion and raising issues are through village meetings, debates facilitated by NGOs or in discussions with local leaders in the community.

Local radio and regional TV stations focus on entertainment and news and provide few opportunities for people to present their views on air. The only community radio closed its operation just prior to the research. Most listeners in rural areas interact with local radio stations only to place family announcements (births, marriages and deaths) and to request a song dedication.   Just over 40 percent of respondents knew about programmes that promote audience participation despite living in areas where there is substantial radio signal coverage from national and local stations and where such programming is broadcast.

Low literacy levels together with financial constraints do not make either print media or the internet viable communication channels for poor people. However, the rapid expansion of mobile telephony could present opportunities for wider interaction across the media.

4. Recommendations

The study's interlinked and reinforcing recommendations highlight: (a) the need to enhance dialogue, consultation and among three key groups: local people, the media (particularly radio) and other information sources (local leaders, government service providers and NGOs (b) radio as the most accessible, affordable and reliable media for the majority of people.

Improve capacity of local people to access and participate in local media programmes by:

- setting up and supporting village listening groups to engage local people from different social groups in debating issues raised in radio programmes and developing a plan of action to address these issues.
- Promoting active participation in media : including training local people to record interviews on specific issues highlighting questions, opinions and concerns to be broadcast on radio; setting up phone access points within local communities at specific times to link into radio programmes.

This recommendation acknowledges that broadcast media is not by itself able to bring about sustainable change in people's attitudes and practices. It stresses the need for radio broadcasts to be accompanied or mediated with face-to-face support, training and services from local authorities, NGOs and other service providers.

Improve capacity of the media by:

- improving the legal and regulatory framework for the media
- expanding the outreach and improving the programming on national radio
- expanding the capacity of local FM radio stations
- supporting programming aimed at audience participation.

This recommendation recognizes that national media initiatives are important but do not always reflect local priorities, make provision to translate selected programmes into local languages and take account of social/cultural nuances. Local media currently do not have the capacity to respond effectively to local needs.

Enhance collaboration between local leaders, NGOs and local media by:

- improving existing structures and systems to increase participation between local people and local stakeholders
- identifying new ways to meet needs of local people

This recommendation acknowledges that meetings with local leaders and NGOs represent two of the most direct and accessible channels for local people to increase their understanding of and express opinions on development and governance issues.

Establishing a network of regional communication centres

This is a medium term goal and envisages a network of regional communication centres which would provide facilities for local communication initiatives and also act as a catalyst to forge strategic partnerships on communication. These centres would provide the necessary support and structure to maximise existing local potential and resources and help focus donor interest on developing communication capacity at the regional level.

GHANA

1. Research

Three research locations that showcased key diversities within the country particularly with regard to ethnic groups, religions and social status were selected. All three areas were poor and reflected other important criteria including a balance between remote and urban areas, the existence/absence of donor activity and the existence/absence of community radio. Nima, a slum suburb of Accra, has access to the relatively advanced communications and IT systems of the capital city; Ada, a fishing and farming community, is only 72 miles from Accra and located on the cross-country route between Ghana and Togo and also enjoys access to the some of the country's mass communication networks and finally the Bonsaaso villages, part of the Millennium Village Project in the Ashanti region. Although only 57 kilometres from Kumasi, the second largest city in Ghana, Bonasso is landlocked and to a large extent excluded from the country's mass communication network.

2. Findings on Access to Information

2.1. Radio

In Ghana radio is the most common medium for people to access information. Low levels of literacy are not seen as a barrier to radio access as local language programming is common throughout the country. Radio is seen as a leveller in information dissemination and as a feedback mechanism that cuts across socio-economic divisions. Since the liberalisation of the wavebands in 1992 privately owned FM radio stations have spread across the country. Ada has a community radio station, Nima has access to all the Accra stations while Bonsaaso villages only have irregular access (with poor reception) to Kumasi radio stations. Virtually all male and female respondents in the three areas confirmed they had radios in their homes. The vast majority of male respondents and a significant proportion of female interviewees said that 'always having electricity or batteries for the radio is a family priority.'

The community radio station in Ada, with its focus on local social, cultural and economic issues, involves the community in the development of programmes and offers people the opportunity to discuss matters important to them. Respondents here indicated that they had a higher degree of trust in this medium than any other 'because it is ours, because it is us talking and because it uses the local language'. The presence of community radio is seen as providing Ada residents with more opportunities to 'have a voice' than areas without this facility. Community radio exerts significant influence within the community. For example, Radio Ada's coverage and support for protesters against a salt mining company for its failure to pay relevant 'dues' to the local government contributed to over 500 local people joining the protest.

2.2. Mobile Telephony

Mobile phone usage in Ghana is widespread and mobile telephony is projected to be the most widely used communication technology in the country within a relatively short timeframe. Since Ghana telecom was liberalised leading the way for deregulation of telecommunications mobile phone subscriptions have grown from 383,000 in 2002 to an estimated 12 million subscribers at the end of 2008. This compares with around 140,000 fixed phone lines. In Nima respondents cited mobile telephony as

their leading information source with just over 90 per cent of both men and women using mobile phones. In Ada and Bonsasso the usage is much lower with approximately 50 percent of the male population using mobile phones.

2.3. Television

The rural/urban divide is particularly evident in access to and ownership of television. In Nima a reliable electricity supply and guaranteed reception has contributed to most households having their own television set. Just over 40 percent of those interviewed in Nima said that after radio TV was their most important means of receiving information. It is a very different picture in Ada and Bonsaaso where it is rare for households to own a television. However, respondents in these communities reported that they sometimes went to neighbouring homes or shops to view television.

2.4. Print Media

There is limited availability of newspapers outside Accra and regional centres. Newspaper content tends to focus on national issues with little coverage of rural or development concerns. Remote and rural communities are able to access some newspaper content as several FM stations translate selected articles and broadcast these to local communities in the local language. Almost all men and approximately half the women interviewed in Nima indicated that they had access to newspapers.

This contrasts sharply with the other two localities where only 15 and 20 percent of men in Ada and Bonsaaso respectively, and no women in either community, indicated that they had access to newspapers. These findings also resonate with literacy rates of respondents: 80 per cent of both men and women in Nima, just under 70 percent of men and 10% of women in Ada and 78 percent of men and 37 percent of women in Bonsaaso reported they were able to read in English.

2.5. Internet

Internet can be accessed in Accra and other urban centres with internet cafes now viable businesses in these areas. Home-based broadband and wireless is becoming more common in urban areas but the monthly subscription rate of US$100 makes these services unaffordable for the majority of the population. All those interviewed in Ada and Bonsaaso reported that the internet was neither available in their home nor in their community.

In Nima, however, 14 per cent of men and 6 percent of women said they had internet access in their homes. Focus group discussions with community leaders in Nima confirmed that the internet is becoming increasingly central to the lives of residents, particularly among young people. Internet cafes are available in the community and they are well patronised. On a negative note, recent national news coverage has reflected increasing concern about the growing prevalence of internet fraud perpetrated by young men in Nima and other urban areas.

2.6. Traditional means of accessing information

Traditional and religious leaders are considered as authoritative sources of information in Ghanaian society. Respondents in the three locations confirmed that churches and mosques were very important information sources and key channels of communication. They said that in these spaces they received encouragement and guidance on education, farming, health as well as standards for religious and moral behaviour. A focus group meeting with the Chief, his Elders and other opinion formers in Bonsaaso illustrated the importance of the traditional authority with the presence of the Chief

raising the profile of the meeting as a possible problem-solving opportunity. This area has remained relatively 'detached' from modern trends with no community radio and the overall authority remained in the hands of traditional leaders. In Nima where new communication technologies are easily accessed, Mosques and Churches continue to be an important source of information.

3. Communication

3.1. Community Radio

Community radio in Ada and other parts of the country is seen as having a number of advantages over national radio including: (i) it is targeted to, and run by, local people who have a lot in common and gives them the opportunity to have their say on specific issues. Crucially, community radio will continue to cover key concerns and generate ideas on how to bring about change in an acceptable way (ii) it can enhance democratic practice at local level by inviting local politicians and government officials to discuss and explain specific policies and decisions in response to concerns expressed on air by local people.

3.2. Mobile telephony

The findings from the three pilot locations suggest that the more exposure people have to mobile phones the more likely they are to place trust in the technology. In Nima, the urban centre, where there is good connectivity nearly 60% of male and female respondents reported that the mobile phone was an important tool for providing development opportunities and was central to conducting their affairs whereas in Ada and Bonsaaso fewer than 40 per cent of men and 20 per cent of women expressed trust in the information they received by mobile phones.

3.3. Call-in radio programmes

Mobile telephony is increasingly merging with FM radio through the introduction of call-in radio programmes. These programmes allow ordinary people, regardless of education attainment or social level, to have a say on issues that directly affect them. In this way they have the potential to become agenda setters/influence the direction of public discourse with their views taken up and promoted by others.

It is suggested that call-in programmes have become the communication vehicle of choice for people who can access FM radio stations and who feel comfortable using this mechanism. There are no reliable statistics available on the number of people participating in call-in programmes but there is some indication of 'serial-calling' where a small number of people overwhelm FM stations with multiple calls giving the mistaken impression of widescale participation in the process.

3.4. Internet

Only in Nima ,which has widespread access, did respondents rank internet as an important communication mechanism. In this locality there was general agreement that the internet was a vital medium for communicating availability of development opportunities.[48] As the internet is not accessible in either Ada or and Bonsaaso respondents did not consider it relevant to their development needs.

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[48]   The study also points out that in Nima the internet is also used for criminal gain.

4. Recommendations

Support an improved legal and regulatory framework for the media

Steps are already in place to move forward on this recommendation. Freedom of Information and Broadcasting Bills are currently under consideration by the Parliament which if passed are expected to improve access to information by the media and citizens and provide a regulatory framework to guide and monitor content of FM radio stations replacing the current laissez-faire approach to radio content.

Support the implementation of existing legislation

Development stakeholders as well as the media should lobby for the implementation of the communications provisions of the Local Government Act (1992) which provides for the setting up of Public Relations Committees at local government levels to receive feedback from the people. These provisions have yet to be implemented in a meaningful way.

Build capacity of the media

Efforts should be made to:

- Promote public service journalism by offering media practitioners training on Ghana's development priorities with specific emphasis on the Millennium Development Goals. (MDGs)
- improve the quality of programme content and make it relevant to the development needs of the country.
- monitor content of print and broadcast media, including community radio

Promote the replication/scaling up of Community Radio Stations

The success of Radio Ada in one of the pilot sites strongly suggests that community radio has a valuable role in empowering poor people and the model should be replicated in other parts of the country.

Establish Community Information Centres

Support the identification of safe meeting places within communities for people to exchange information, and discuss issues. Local authorities could provide leadership in establishing such information centres. Currently the Ministry of Information, supported by UNDP, is in the process of establishing Community Information Centres at district level in each of the 53 regions of the country.

Promote a greater role for companies in the empowerment process

Encourage telecommunication companies to use their Corporate Social Responsibility funds to provide opportunities for more disadvantaged communities to have better access to information and communication channels. Possible initiatives might include (i) supporting the setting up and running of community radio stations, including the provision of masts, in remote areas to assist connectivity and (ii) assisting community media in developing relevant programming materials.

Promote media networking and collaboration

The media, especially radio, should also begin to share development intervention strategies which work well in their areas. For instance, successful programmes with a

specific development focus on community radio stations should be shared with commercial radio stations to encourage the latter to become engaged in this areas.

Develop a national communication for empowerment strategy

Such a strategy would be informed by study findings, include specific initiatives to follow up on key recommendations and aim to insert a C4E approach into broader development planning.

D LAO PDR

1. Research

This study forms part of the UNDP Asia regional initiative 'Indigenous voices: communication for empowerment of Asia's indigenous peoples'. It was conducted jointly by the Regional Indigenous Peoples Programme (RIPP) and UNDP's Asia Regional Governance Programme (ARGP) in collaboration with the UNDP country office in Lao PDR. Research at district level aimed to achieve a sample view that would reflect diversity of ethnicity as well as differences in levels of poverty between more and less remote communities. This sample view was also used a mean of verification of the findings of the national media context study.

A number of criteria influenced the selection of the three district locations including, remoteness, presence of community radio, existence of territorial development project, and a requirement to be among the 47 poorest districts in the country identified in the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES). Research was carried in Khoun District in Xieng Khouang Province (presence of community radio), Nga District in Oudomxai Province (regional rural development project in progress) and Dakcheung District in the remote Sekong District in Sekong Province. Research at local level was supplemented by reviews of a range of reports and policies.[49]

2. Findings on Access to Information

In Lao PDR, major media establishments are government owned. In recent years there has been a considerable increase in the information sources available with the establishment of internet cafes, satellite and cable TV broadcasting international information networks. However, limited resources and levels of literacy are a major determinant of the types of media accessed. Across the 3 pilots sites over 80 per cent of respondents can neither read nor write in their own language and around 40 per cent are illiterate in the Lao language. Access to all forms of media is significantly lower in Sekong District due to the remoteness of the area.

2.1. Radio

Over 80 percent of the 6.5 million population have access to radio. Radio is an effective medium of communication, particularly among the poor and ethnic people who have limited literacy skills- as it is closest to traditional oral communication.

In all three districts radio is the key medium through which respondents said they receive information from and about the world outside their village. Radio is considered the most trusted and useful source of information closely followed by word of mouth.[50] The popularity of radio is not just a function of ownership but also holds true for respondents who don't own a radio. One of the reasons given for its high

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[49] These included: Lao Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry workshop report 'Linking the Last Mile: Best Practices in rural communication to improve farmers' and communities' access to information (2007), 'Improving Basic Social Service Delivery with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the rural areas of the Mekong Region' (Bestle, 2004) ; ILO's 'Policy Study on Ethnic Minority Issues in Rural Development; Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and tribal Peoples' (2000).

[50] The research draws on a study conducted by the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) in 2006 which found that word of mouth was most valued form of communication followed by radio which in turn was more popular than TV.

ranking is its dual role as an entertainment provider as well as information source. Radio is also considered a particularly important medium for receiving information on issues related to ethnic development. Over half of those interviewed said that they had a radio at home and a larger percentage said they could listen to radio within the community. The importance of radio portability was emphasised by one respondent who heard the official start of the Hmong New Year announced on the radio when he was working in the rice field

Most respondents in Khoun District indicated a preference for their community radio over Lao national radio as they are able to receive local news and current affairs programmes, information is not dominated by official messages and information on health and agriculture sectors is broadcast in the three main local languages (Hmong, Khamu and Lao Lum). The radio broadcasts daily for one hour in each local language – 20 minutes is allocated to music and the remaining 40 minutes is devoted to disseminating information on technical, cultural and administrative issues. Interview-ees also value the fact that they can request dedications and hear cultural an-nouncements. Community radio is considered an important uniting force within the community motivating people to improve themselves.

These findings in Khoun district resonate with the experience of the Oxfam Austra-lia/UNESCO supported community radio project in two districts of Saravane province in the south of the country. A recent evaluation of the Saravane project concluded that a number of issues threatened the future sustainability of the community radio stations including lack of skills and staff, particularly ethnic staff, able to speak local languages, unreliable equipment, difficulty in attracting cooperation from other sectors including private bodies and limited coordination between district and relevant provincial departments.

2.2. Mobile Phones

Approximately 13 per cent of those interviewed said that their households have access to and use of mobile phones and VCR/DVD players. Respondents mentioned using mobiles to contact relatives or for fast communication in the event of an emergency.

2.3. Newspapers

There are over 60 publications, including daily and weekly newspapers, monthly and quarterly magazines as well as journals and news bulletins on a wide range of issues. All national newspapers are printed in Lao and available in English and French but not in ethnic languages. Some provinces have their own newspapers but these are not printed in ethnic languages. With a largely urban literate readership newspaper content does not as a rule cover rural issues. Low literacy levels together with limited availability of newspapers in rural areas indicate that print media is not currently a viable communication tool for indigenous peoples. The usual practice is for the head of the village to keep a copy of a paper from the district meetings and share the content with villagers. Some villagers indicated that a newspaper will be kept for several months and read repeatedly until replaced.

2.4. Television

Although almost fifty per cent of Lao households are estimated to have television only a small proportion of respondents in the three districts indicated they had television at home. However, 46 percent were able to access television within the community. Television is viewed as much for entertainment as a source of information. House-

holds close to the Thai border receive Thai channels and in some places these are the only channels they can access.

2.5. Access to traditional local sources

The village loudspeaker is cited by several respondents in each research location as a key means of receiving information. Virtually all villages have loudspeaker systems which are operated mostly by the government but in some villages by local people. In remote mountainous areas where radio reception is patchy loudspeakers are the main means of receiving information from outside the community. The loudspeakers use cassette tapes to rebroadcast selected national radio programmes in local languages and information on government regulations and laws, local traditions and customs and a range of themes designed to reduce poverty. For example, broadcasts that focus on agriculture include information on how to grow and make a profit from animal fodder, cattle raising and buffalo. Nga district is one of the 7 districts in Oudomxai province covered by an extensive rural development project. A loud-speaker system, powered by solar energy and operated by a loudspeaker manage-ment team, has been installed in 36 villages as a key element of the project.

Face to face meetings are extremely important for local people. Meetings with village officials help to explain the content and meaning of official documents. Staff from various development agencies provide important information on village development in general and more specifically on areas such as school construction. Respondents said that meetings with district office officials were their primary source of information relating to health and hygiene – specifically improved sanitation, vaccinations and use of mosquito nets.

Interviewees identified a need for more information on several areas including agriculture including crop and animal husbandry, market prices as well as forest conversation and natural resource management, community and enterprise develop-ment, health issues including family planning, HIV/AIDS and sanitation, ethnic and cultural matters, gender issues particularly relating to women's health issues and activities at the national level and urban areas. The absence of reliable power supplies at local, district and national level was regarded as a key obstacle to the media being able to fill these information gaps.

3. Communication

In all three pilot districts respondents indicated low usage of media to communicate. In order to express concern to local authorities word of mouth remains the most important means of communication for almost 80 percent of households with approximately twenty percent writing letters to raise issues. Most people felt that they have very few opportunities to respond to what they hear or see in the media. Where circumstances permit, radio is the preferred medium, followed by mobile phone.

Whilst community radio has clearly been an effective means of transmitting informa-tion to ethnic groups who do not understand or speak Lao, it is less clear that the initiatives in Khoun district have fulfilled community radio's potential of allowing poorer groups to have their say by encouraging two way communication.

The three key vehicles for communication are word of mouth among friends, the village headman and the district authorities. Approaches to the latter involve direct contacts and request forms or letters.

4. Recommendations

The Government of Lao PDR's goal of moving the country out of LDC status by 2020 presupposes greater access to media and ICTs by both citizens and government bodies. This is regarded as a pre-requisite to facilitate participation by the most disadvantaged groups in decision-making on public services. It will therefore be important to:

National level

- Promote the mainstreaming of communication for empowerment within national poverty eradication and social development planning processes.
- Ensure consideration of a mix of both traditional and new information and communication technologies to meet the complex needs of the diverse ethnic groups in the country.

Community level

- Draw on the experience of Khoun District to scale up community radio across the country by (a) establishing more radio stations, (b) enhancing their capacity to promote the voice of ethnic people through vertical communication [between communities and authorities] and horizontal communication (between communities) and (c) by introducing additional appropriate ICTs.
- Combine community radio with internet through community telecentres that provide shared access to computers, internets and other ICTs that support health, education, agriculture and cultural development.
- Promote the expansion of mobile telephony into the most remote and poorest areas of Lao PDR through low-cost handsets and services, innovative funding initiatives and efficient markets

Capacity building

- Provide training for media practitioners in order to expand community radio outreach to more remote ethnic communities.
- Information intermediaries need to be trained to deliver information to remote communities via the internet and to promote debate and feedback on the content.
- Build the capacity of both broadcast and print journalists at national level to report and promote debate on issues that of direct interest to ethnic people.

E NEPAL

1. Research

Nepal is currently in the throes of social and democratic political transitions, where the old structures of high caste social and political dominance are gradually giving way to a more socially inclusive and democratic system. This state-building process has increasingly witnessed various group assertions and contentious demands based on identity politics (ethno-politics), including the issue of right to self-determination, which has been interpreted differently among various social groups in Nepal and will have significant implications on the future governance system of the country. According to the 2001 census of Nepal, there are over 100 castes, ethnic and religious groups, and no single group makes up for more than 16% of the population. There are 59 recognised indigenous nationalities and together they constitute 37.2% of the population.

This study forms part of the UNDP's regional initiative on 'Indigenous voices: communication for empowerment of Asia's indigenous peoples'. It was conducted jointly by the Regional Indigenous Peoples Programme (RIPP) and Asia Regional Governance Programme (ARGP) of the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok in collaboration with the Association of Nepalese Indigenous Nationalities Journalists (ANIJ) and UNDP country office in Nepal. The objective of the C4E assessment at district level was to get a sample view of the information and communication needs among at least three main groups of indigenous peoples (IPs) that would also reflect diversity of ethnicities, different geographical range, and development levels. The findings of the assessment are compared to trends in media development at the national level to identify the gaps in meeting the expressed communication and information needs of IPs.

The field research was conducted in three districts: 1) Durgauli, Kailali district in mid-western Nepal; 2) Syaphru, Rasuwa district in the central region north of Kathmandu; and 3) Basantapur, Tehrathum district in the eastern region of the country. The research locations were identified during the *Training Workshop on C4E Study and Assessment Methodology for Indigenous People in Nepal,* Kathmandu in June 2009. Research at local level was supplemented by interviews with relevant officials and national overview study of the state of media in Nepal.

2. Findings on Access to Information

By and large, Nepal's media is owned and controlled by dominant groups. IPs and other excluded groups have low representation in the media. Their demands are often misrepresented or ignored. In addition, language remains a major barrier. The IPs run media are generally said to be more receptive to covering issues of interest to IPs. The partisan nature of the media in Nepal has resulted in coverage of one view or another, rather than all the views needed for proper understanding state-building issues. There have been instances where media has been attacked because of the public perception that they did not reflect the views of particular sides, including IPs.

As far as access to media at the research locations is concerned, apart from Rasuwa district, access to all types of media, except print media, is high in Kailali and Tehrathum district. Access to information that respondents deemed relevant and addressed IP issues varied according to the remoteness of the location and presence of local mass media. Mobile telephones ranked high, even in the Rasuwa district

which had lowest media exposure, in terms of ownership as well as on the relevance and usefulness of the information.

Key challenges that were identified through the study include the misinterpretation of IP issues in the mainstream media; the need for capacity building programmes for journalists, for media management and editors to enhance their understanding of IP issues; and the need to make existing communication channels, particularly community radio, more inclusive and representative of different ethnic and religious groups.

2.1. Radio

On aggregate, Radio is the important source of information, and is widely owned and accessed by 71.7% of the respondents. The coverage of issues relevant to IPs was considered higher on the radio than in any other type of media. Interestingly, radio does not rank much higher than other types of media in terms of relevance and usefulness of its programmes. Though there are no 'community run' radio stations, Kailali district and Tehrathum district have their own local FM stations that cover issues concerning IPs. Respondents indicated preference for educational and information programmes rather than entertainment.

Radio Menchayem, local FM station in Tehrathum districts allocates 14hrs per week for IP related programmes, including Limbu language programme. The station also works closely with Indigenous People Organization (IPO) to develop programme content and provide balanced coverage of IP groups in the district. It also has a team of volunteer correspondents who cover development issues and projects in the district. Despite its efforts, Radio Menchayem faces criticisms regarding the use of Nepali words in Limbu language programme- which it argues was necessary to explain issues, particularly related to developments regarding the Constituent Assembly (CA). It has also been accused of taking sides at times, which illustrates issues related to professionalism, impartiality and credibility.

The issue of trust in media came up in multiple contexts during the research. Respondents from all IPs groups indicated that the lack of or negative coverage of issue related to their group was due to lack of journalists from their ethnic group in media agencies. This sentiment was shared even by Raji IP group, whose total population is only about 3500 people[51]. While it is essential for each ethnic group to have access to information and communication channels as well as the capacity to generate discussions on issues that are important to them, it is also important to consider the sentiments expressed above within the fragile context of state building and strong ethno-politics in Nepal. Additional research and analysis is required to understand if the perception of negative coverage by certain journalists is due to mistrust created by ethno-politics or reflects a lack of capacity of the journalists to present objective stories in the media. Both causes would require different sets of media strategies to meaningfully address the issues.

Rasuwa district, which is the least developed of the three research locations, does not have any local media agencies and receives broadcasts from the national radio- Radio Nepal and from the radio stations from neighboring districts. Understandably, the coverage of local IP issues, including conflict with national park officials, was very limited. Respondents from the district ranked radio lower than mobile telephones in terms of ownership and relevance and usefulness of information.

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[51]   During the focus group discussions in Kailali district, the Tharu IPs indicated that the non-Tharu journalists did not visit their village and are not interested in reporting about them.

The state-run Radio Nepal broadcasts news in 20 languages including in numerous IP languages. It has news broadcasts in Nepali, English, Magar, Gurung, Tamang, Rai Bantawa, Limbu, Newari, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Urdu, Tharu East and Tharu West, Avadhi, Sherpa, Maithili, Sanskrit, Kham Magar and Doteli languages. However, since IP languages are not standardized, there are issues regarding the use of one dialect over another.

2.2. Mobile Phones

The mobile telephone network coverage is extensive and both CDMA and GSM technologies are widely available. Currently, all 75 districts in Nepal have CDMA phones (mobile phones that use a different technology and also low cost) and by mid- 2010 all 75 districts are expected to have GSM coverage as well. Given the extensive network coverage, ownership of mobile phones is also relatively high. Approximately 80% of those interviewed said that they own mobile phones. Owner-ship of mobile phones was the lowest in Tehrathum district at 59.5% and highest in Rasuwa at 96.8%. In Kailali, the ownership rate is 90%. Information received over the mobile phones was considered highly reliable, more than the information received on Radio, by the respondents.

2.3. Newspapers

Access to print media is limited outside of Kathmandu and other urban centres and a majority are published in Nepali. Over 85% of the 2601 registered newspapers are published in Nepali, closely followed by publications in English. Other language newspapers and periodicals, including in IP languages are published. The state run media following government directives has begun programming and publishing in various IP groups languages. *Gorkhapatra,* the official state run Nepali language daily, since 2006 began publishing an insert, '*Naya Nepal'* (New Nepal), a two-page supplement in various IP languages, one per day. The supplement provides space for IP issues and carries news and opinions on contemporary issues, culture, interviews, etc. At best the government newspaper reaches only the district headquarters and none of the villagers at the research locations mentioned the paper. `

Interviewees in Kailali districts, where literacy rate stands at 50%, indicated that the coverage of IPs issue was lowest in newspapers. Newspapers were not available in Rasuwa and therefore they were not considered as a key source of information. Tehrathum district witnessed numerous attempts to establish local newspapers, including in Limbu language, but none were successful beyond few issues. This could be due to low levels of literacy in IP languages.

2.4. Television

Television is an important source of information and entertainment. State run Nepal television broadcasts on two channels and mostly in Nepali. Many respondents in all three research locations indicated that they use DVD/VCR to watch movies, including in local IP languages. In Kailali, where literacy rates and television ownership rates are higher than the other two research locations, television was considered a very reliable source of information over radio. There are no television programme that specifically focus on IP issues in IP languages and therefore, respondents in Rasuwa and Tehrathum did not regard television as a key information source on IP issues.

2.5. Internet

Nepal has fiber optic cable and therefore has the foundation for enhancing connec-tivity in the country. Though Community Tele Centres and private internet centres

provide internet access, participant's level of access is very low in all the research locations and practically non-existent in Rasuwa.

2.6. Access to traditional local sources

Eighty percent of the respondents in Durgauli, Kailali district indicated that the Village Crier or *Katuwal* is an important source of information. Word of mouth still remains a major form of information and communication. The other sources of information are teachers, the female community health volunteers. Markets and public gatherings are important points of information exchange among people. The study did not provide any indications on if and how local people, including women, discussed state building and fiscal decentralisation with local officials or politicians.

The community media centres, telecenters, community learning centres were not operating in the study locations. In two districts, there were some early efforts to set up these centres. Private internet service centres were not used by the villagers (those who did, use it for personal communications i.e. email).

3. Communication

Use of media for communication is limited, as per the findings of the study. Respondents in all the three research districts expressed their inability to communicate with journalists to cover their issues or alter the stories broadcasted. They also indicated that journalists don't visit their village to get their perspective. Even in Tehrathum, which has an active local FM station that covers IPs issues and has Limbu language programmes, interviewees indicated that they do not use the station to communicate their views. In the words of one interviewee, "The radio has not broadcast the voice of anyone from this village. We have not had an opportunity to talk to journalists. It has to broadcast our, positive development news."

Participants in Rasuwa felt that their own local FM station would give then both the information they need and offer opportunities to express their opinions. Thus, one of the key challenges arising from the C4E assessment in Nepal is the need to make existing communication channels such as community radio more inclusive and representative of different ethnic and religious groups and gender

4. Recommendations

The Government of Nepal recognizes the importance of inclusion of IPs groups in the current discussion on state-building to create a socially inclusive democratic state. It also places importance on developing and harnessing its media and ICT sector to bolster development as well as improve governance reforms and growth. Media has a critical role to play in informing public on various view-points and issues at hand to facilitate informed public discussion and debates and bring IPs voices into main stream debates.

It will therefore be important to focus on the below six recommendations:

Improve coverage of IPs issues in the media

- Support production and dissemination of knowledge on IPs issues, rights and demands for media coverage.
- Raise awareness and knowledge of journalists on covering IPs issues.

- Raise awareness among IPs communities about the media and encourage them to participate in public discussions on IPs issues in the media through media literacy initiatives.
- Encourage greater interaction between indigenous peoples' organizations (IPOs) and decision makers/opinion leaders through interactive media formats in both mainstream and community media.

Capacity building

- Support a range of training programs (including specialisations such as investigative and in-depth reporting) targeting different media organizations.
- Support and promote 'citizens journalism' including the use of New Media by individuals and IPOs.
- Support orientation programs of media professionals to enable them to better understand the issues affecting the IPs.

ICTs & public private partnerships

- Set up pilot IPs media/ ICT initiatives at locations that have low media exposure and high IPs populations.
- Establish partnerships with private sector and civil society organizationsto devise sustainable models of engagement.

Access to information

- Support awareness efforts on right to information
- Ensure availability of public information in IPs languages.
- Initiate efforts to make all public information easily available to all citizens, with special efforts to enhance the access of indigenous peoples to such information.
- Work with the High-Level Commission for IT and the National Information Commission for developing appropriate applications for facilitating information access for IPs in collaboration with IPOs.

Strengthening voice and participation of IPs

- Conduct a strategic review of Nepal's radio sector to identity areas of intervention to ensure access, voice and participation of marginalized groups.
- Develop series of strategic responses based on a community media performance assessment conducted in partnership with media organizations
- Restructure the operations and management to ensure voices and inclusive community participation, including proportionate representation of IPs at all levels.
- Build capacity, including in-house training and coaching of the community media.
- Consider setting up model community radio stations for serving marginalized groups, including IPs.

Mainstreaming IPs issues and targeted interventions

- Explore opportunities for mainstreaming C4E, media and ICTs in all existing and proposed government programs and donor projects.

- Formulate programmes that build on the above recommendations to support C4E of IPs.
- Assess the potential for establishing a regional mechanism for capacity development and exchanges among IPs groups.

Strengthening the role of indigenous women in the media

- Convening a national meeting among women from indigenous communities to analyze the present situation and identify the reasons for low representation of indigenous women in media.
- Capacity building for indigenous women in the media, including training and coaching of indigenous women journalists.
- Supporting for production of media programmes focusing on women issues and coverage of issues relevant to women's lives.
- Gender policy for radio stations to ensure equal representation of women.

Knowledge and experience sharing

- Explore the potentials of setting up regional consultative mechanisms under existing regional forums.
- Establish a regional knowledge sharing mechanism for giving continuity to regional knowledge and experience on C4E initiatives.
- Regularly document issues related to indigenous peoples, their cultures and livelihood outcomes, also in video, for sharing the knowledge and experiences with the larger IPs community and society.
- Set up a mechanism for archiving indigenous knowledge related to C4E.

7 Selected Resources

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