

Assessing and evaluating communication activities: Tools for improving communication of research and knowledge for development

Time: Thursday 4th of December 2008, 13:00 - 16:30

Venue: University of Copenhagen, Department of Geography and Geology, Øster Voldgade 10, 1350 Copenhagen K. Meeting room 05.2.527

Do you work with communication of research and/or knowledge for development and are you interested in knowing more about the results and impact of your activities?

This workshop will shed light on the quite new issue of monitoring and evaluating research communication and other development oriented communication. The main goal of the workshop is to provide inspiration on how to plan and implement communication activities strategically – and on how to approach the challenge of monitoring and evaluating these activities.

1. Background and content

This will be the third seminar in a series on research communication launched in 2008 to: 1) promote the use of research based knowledge in development practice, 2) help bringing development research on the public agenda, and 3) strengthen the communication skills of members of the three Danish research networks: Danish Water Forum (DWF), Danish Research Network for International Health (ENRECAHEALTH), and Danish Development Research Network (DDRN).

The first seminar of the series stressed the important challenge of evaluating research communication, which is also high on the agenda of leading knowledge and research intermediaries, e.g. the UK - based Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and Science and Development Network (SciDev.Net). Discussing evaluation of research communication is necessary at a time with increasing demand to prove impact and demonstrate the value of the research that donors and universities support and/or carry out. It can also be used as a tool for planning and implementing communication activities strategically. It is, however, still a quite new field; and inspiration on how to approach it can be provided by other fields of communication for development.

For instance, development research analyses factors and processes of relevance to decision makers and practitioners at several levels, from policy makers to local communities. Research communication thus often aims at promoting some kind of change; as does dissemination of policies, strategies, and evaluations implemented by donors and development organisations.

There are various ways of approaching communication for development, from articles and other publications, to e.g. meetings and workshops. A commonly acknowledged challenge in these activities is how to demonstrate the effect of communication. Counting the number of academic citations, of brochures distributed, or of visitors to a website, may be relatively easy, but does not necessarily say much about the difference made in practice.

To address this challenge, this seminar will include examples and considerations regarding monitoring and evaluation of research communication as well as considerations regarding the importance of research communication in general and experiences from assessing communication activities from other fields than research communication, i.e. communicating development aid evaluations.

2. Objectives

The objective of this seminar is to provide participants with:

- Insight into leading actors and environments working with M&E of research communication;
- Knowledge of Danida's view on research communication and work within evaluation of communication activities;
- Examples from cases of M&E of research communication activities and communication of other knowledge aimed at promoting change;
- Inspiration on how to approach research communication and other communication activities strategically.

These objectives will be achieved through presentations and group discussions, where

participants will be able to discuss their experiences and/or upcoming communication activities with resource persons and other participants of the workshop.

3. Target group

Researchers, decision makers and development practitioners who are interested in communication of research and knowledge for development and in sharing their experiences with colleagues.

4. About the presenters

- *Anna Downie* is the evaluation coordinator for the IDS Knowledge Services in the UK which produce information services for development audiences around the world, using online, print and face - to - face channels. These include Eldis, id21 and BRIDGE. She is part of the Strategic Learning Initiative which is funded by DFID as part of the Mobilising Knowledge for Development Programme.
- *Darriann Riber* is chief technical adviser for development research in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She has a master in anthropology and media/communication and has previously been responsible for the development communication and media projects in the Ministry.
- *Margrethe Holm Andersen* is currently the deputy head of the Department for Evaluation of Development Assistance (EVAL) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Denmark. She holds a Master in Public Administration and a Ph.D. in Gender and Politics. Margrethe has worked as a long - term Danish adviser in Tanzania, MFA technical adviser on environment, and deputy head of the Technical Advisory Services and of the Danish embassy in Maputo.
- *Jackie Davies* is an independent communication consultant specialising in development communications, particularly in peace - building, health and education. Jackie's key focus areas are monitoring and evaluation and research communication. She has worked as a consultant for a broad range of international non - governmental organisations and UN agencies, and headed the development of the Oneworld Radio network of websites, and the Radio Unit of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa.

5. Practicalities

Participation in the seminar is free, but registration is required. To register, please send an email to Marianne Forti, maf@ddrn.dk, no later than December 1, 2008.

The final programme will be sent to all participants prior to the seminar.

Draft programme

13:00 – 13:05: Welcome and outline of objectives and programme, by DDRN

13:05 – 13:25: Did it make any difference? Evaluating research communications:

Why? What? And How? By Anna Downie, Strategic Learning Initiative, IDS

13:25 – 13:40: Communication and Research, by Darriann Riber, Technical Advisory Services, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

13:40 – 13:55: Communication of evaluations of Danish development aid: Results and ideas, by Margrethe Holm Andersen, Evaluation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

13:55 – 14:10: Research Communication: M&E tools and case studies, by Jackie Davies, Independent Consultant, Communication for Development (C4D) Consulting, UK

14:10 – 14:25: Experiences from a Danish research programme (to be confirmed)

14:25 – 15:00: Questions and discussion

15:00 – 15:15: Break

15:15 – 16:15: Experiences, challenges and good practices: Group discussions and identification of key elements in assessing and evaluating communication activities

16:15 – 16:30: Summing up and next steps

For more information please contact: Marianne Forti: maf@ddrn.dk