



The 3rd International Forum
on Water and Food
Tshwane, South Africa
November 14 – 17, 2011



Co-hosted by:



Comm4Dev+Research4Dev: The Dynamic Duo

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Session: Sharefair and Learning to Innovate

Key Message

Communication is part of every human activity. It is important to understand how participative communication in the internal and external process of research enhances the power of our results and capitalizes on the collective consensus about what development means and how to get it. Comm4Dev is not just Institutional Communication. It seeks to use communication as part of the change process. It should not be seen as a separate activity. Research to improve people's lives implies the need to have coordinated and committed teams (internal communication) that positively impact their environment (external communication).

Summary

All the basins are making a big effort to align their research activities to the CPWF theory of change. The theories of communication for development use the participative process as the key tool to promote the change of people's behavior. Communication plays an integral role in this process. CPWF is unique in its "research for development" approach by using the impact pathways to understand how its research will create impact and change. The challenge is how can these conceptual frameworks be put into practice. The use of communication for development principles and approaches is one way.

As the diagram below shows, communication processes need to be embedded within the research for development cycles and not seen as just a by-product. In this sense, communication for development and research for development share the same goals and objectives in terms of trying to

support changes that are foreseen. This paper will explore how this is being done in the different basins and what is working and not working. Some of the highlights include:

- Andes: focusing on understanding the context. The work focused on mapping actors, social capital and understanding conflicts and how communication and research have an opportunity in that context
- Mekong: using a range of face-to-face mechanisms to improve communication as well as non-traditional media
- Nile: developing a range of internal communication mechanisms as a starting point and process for capacity building.

The presentation/discussion will explore lessons learned, roles of different actors and how communication can be used in the process of uptake. It will build upon the work done in the May communication workshop as well as direct experiences from the basins. It is expected that a framework for twinning communication within the research for development paradigm will be further elaborated.

Area	Conventional Research Comms	Communication in Research for development
Objectives	To inform and provide information	Change perceptions and behavior, contribute to development processes
Targets	Researchers, scientists, academics	Multiple actors (farmers, planner, policy makers, private sector, NGOs, etc)
Methodology	One way Passive	Two way – multiple actors involved, participatory Engaged and active
Strategies	Publish in journals Attend scientific meetings Message focused Hand over information to media/Public Information	Strategic communication linked to changes in KAS of targets Seen as part of the social sciences Use multiple channels, products Focused on use rather than production
When	At end of research process	Continuous process where communication is seen as a process for deriving shared meaning

Source: Victor, Baca, 2011