

MAINSTREAMING COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

ENABLING SOCIAL INCLUSION TO SUPPORT FOOD SECURITY,
RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS AND FAMILY FARMING



BACKGROUND PAPER FOR THE XIII UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY
ROUND TABLE ON COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

SEPTEMBER 2014



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its conception in 1986, the United Nations Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development (UNRT ComDev) has provided a significant impetus for inter-agency cooperation and coordination for promoting and advancing communication for development policy and practice. Under the leadership of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the focus of the XIII United Nations Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development, to be held in September 2014, will be on agricultural policies and sustainable livelihoods.

This background paper is designed to generate discussion around how ComDev can be better mainstreamed into both policy and programmes across the United Nations (UN) system. It identifies the specific challenges and initiatives at the global, regional and national level with regards to food and nutrition security and resilient rural livelihoods where ComDev can make a difference. In particular, it highlights the current barriers to poverty alleviation, including access to resources and markets, natural disasters and climate change, food crises and soaring food prices, ageing populations, rural to urban migration and gender imbalances.

Reviewing the seemingly endless debate around ComDev definitions, the paper suggests focusing instead on the key principles of dialogue, advocacy, participation and purpose. By applying these principles across all development programmes and policies, instead of just projects designated as 'ComDev', ComDev can be more effectively utilized to support food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods, and alleviate poverty.

While currently several UN agencies effectively apply ComDev primarily to areas within their mandate, there are opportunities within the UN system for new types of dynamic synergies, including the use of communication technologies and facilitation of dialogue platforms covering wide ranging topics that are relevant to the post-2015 development discourse. In this context, the paper encourages UN agencies to concretely identify such opportunities and develop collaborative partnerships, not only with other UN organizations but also with governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society and grassroots movements.

The paper identifies several specific recommendations for how UN agencies can effectively mainstream ComDev in support of internationally agreed development goals, and in particular when supporting food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods. Recommendations for UN agencies and other institutions are as follows:

- Design and implement a policy framework for ComDev within organizations and programmes.
- Instil a basic level of awareness about ComDev principles and functions among staff.
- Involve at least one ComDev specialist in each programme or initiative who can lead or advise on ComDev processes.
- Develop and systematically adopt consistent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms as part of ComDev strategies across the UN, ensuring strong links with policy.
- Develop and implement an advocacy strategy to systematically promote the principles of ComDev across the UN.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
ComDev	Communication for Development
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FNS	Food and nutrition security
GDPRD	Global Donor Platform for Rural Development
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IYFF	International Year of Family Farming
PfR	Partners for Resilience
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNRT	United Nations Round Table
WCCD	World Congress on Communication for Development



CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This background paper is designed to generate discussion around how Communication for Development (ComDev) can be better mainstreamed into both policy and programmes across the United Nations (UN) system. It identifies the specific challenges and initiatives at the global, regional and national level with regards to food and nutrition security and resilient rural livelihoods where ComDev can make a difference. In particular, it highlights the current barriers to poverty alleviation, including access to resources and markets, natural disasters and climate change, food crises and soaring food prices, ageing populations, rural to urban migration and gender imbalances.

This paper will firstly review the United Nations Inter-Agency Round Tables on Communication for Development and the role of ComDev within the UN. In doing so, it will reflect on the current context, key issues and trends surrounding food security, resilient livelihoods and family farming. It will then discuss key ComDev principles and identify cases where these have been successful, or not, in recent ComDev policy and practice. Lastly, it will provide recommendations for how ComDev can be better mainstreamed across UN policy and practice, including suggestions for greater collaboration and partnership.

1.1 THE UN INTER-AGENCY ROUND TABLE ON COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Since its conception in 1986, the UN Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development (UNRT ComDev) has provided a significant impetus for interagency cooperation and coordination for promoting and advancing communication for development policy and practice. In line with the General Assembly Resolution 50/130 1995, the UNRTs discuss the role of ComDev within the UN system, including mechanisms for strengthening interagency collaboration, as well as the application of ComDev principles and strategies to maximize the impact of development programmes.



Each UNRT – usually a biennial event – is hosted by a single agency based on a common theme. This is increasingly oriented towards internal reflections and shared understanding across the different UN agencies.

Under the leadership of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the focus of the XIII UNRT, to be held on 16–18 September 2014, will be on agricultural policies, sustainable livelihoods and family farming. FAO last hosted the IX UNRT in 2004, where the meeting centred on sustainable development, particularly, communication for natural resource management, isolated and marginalised groups, and research extension and education (UNDP and The World Bank, 2009). The IX UNRT recognized a number of key principles shared between the participants, and these are discussed further in section 3.1. In particular, the IX UNRT determined that ComDev should be people-focused and centred around co-creation and the sharing of knowledge. The IX UNRT called for adequate resourcing of ComDev initiatives, as well as research on how to both achieve and sustain the process and outcomes of ComDev. This was reinforced by the X UNRT, where the meeting determined there needs to be greater linkages and capacity-building initiatives between UN agencies (UNDP and The World Bank, 2009, pp. 25–28). It seems timely to take stock of progress made on these recommendations during the 2014 UNRT.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE XIII UNRT ON COMDEV

Current global challenges – such as climate change, food insecurity and crises that particularly affect rural smallholder families in developing countries – call for knowledge-intensive, location-specific and community-driven strategies (FAO, 2010). Such strategies are well served by ComDev approaches that provide access to information and facilitate knowledge exchange and stakeholder engagement. Considering the potential role ComDev can play in addressing the above challenges, as well as in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the focus of the XIII UNRT will be on strengthening the institutionalization of ComDev. This UNRT aims to identify needs, opportunities and concrete areas of action for mainstreaming ComDev in both policy and development programmes. It will particularly focus on those policies and programmes related to food and nutrition security (FNS), resilient family farming and rural livelihoods, and hence link closely with the activities of the 2014 International Year of Family Farming (IYFF, 2013). Drawing on the results of previous discussions, including the IX UNRT and the 2011 FAO Expert Consultation on Communication for Agricultural and Rural Development, the three main objectives of this UNRT are:

- a) To identify specific challenges and initiatives at the global, regional and national level with regards to FNS and resilient rural livelihoods where ComDev can make a difference;
- b) To advocate for ComDev integration into policies and programmes addressing FNS, rural livelihoods and resilience to threats and crises; and
- c) To identify concrete opportunities for collaborative partnerships in ComDev.

By achieving these goals, the XIII UNRT on ComDev aims both to identify synergies in ComDev policy and practice across participant organizations, and to foster greater collaboration between UN and potential external partnerships.

1.3 EXPANDING THE UN DEFINITION OF COMDEV

ComDev has been a priority for the UN system over the past two decades. Resolution 130 from the 50th session of the UN General Assembly noted the need for improving communication capacities within the UN system, both to ensure more effective inter-agency coordination and cooperation, and to recognize the “pivotal role of communication in the successful implementation of development programmes within the United Nations system” (UN, 1995). During the 51st session of the UN General Assembly in 1996, this was replaced by Resolution 172, which installed the following formal definition: “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” (Article 6 of General Assembly Resolution 51/172, United Nations, 1996). While this remains the official UN definition to date, the Rome Consensus from the 2006 World Congress on Communication for Development (WCCD) issued a more elaborate definition:

“ComDev is a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels, including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change. It is not public relations or corporate communications”

- United Nations Communication for Development, 2011



This definition aims to cover a broad range of communication-related approaches to development, while acknowledging there is considerable cross-over between these processes. The UN therefore splits ComDev into four interlinking processes (UNDP, 2011, p. 7):

- Behavioural change communication (BCC)
- Communication for social change (CFSC)
- Communication for advocacy
- Strengthening an enabling media and communications environment

Despite this definition, each UN agency refers to ComDev by different terminology or phrasing. For example, FAO defines ComDev as a “social process based on dialogue” which “integrates the power of media with local communication systems to increase the involvement of rural populations in development initiatives” (FAO, 2014a). FAO activities focus on capacity development of individuals and organizations at the local, national and regional level, and the institutionalization of ComDev services within national agricultural policies. The ComDev group within FAO is currently located in the Office for Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development. UNICEF, as another example, uses the term ‘Communication for Development’ (C4D) to refer to “a systematic, planned and evidence-based strategic process to promote positive and measurable individual behaviour and social change that is an integral part of development programmes, policy advocacy and humanitarian work” (UNICEF, 2012). UNICEF has a C4D Unit at the Division of Policy and Practice and employs C4D practitioners in regional offices and country programmes. Since 2008, UNICEF’s C4D is guided by two frameworks that provide directions and a reference baseline of actions for C4D staff at headquarters, regional and country levels, namely a C4D Strategic Framework 2008–2011 and a C4D Capability Development Framework. Other agencies again use different terms and definitions, often referring to the same or similar ideas.¹

Notwithstanding these differing terminologies and definitions, ComDev can only be effectively mainstreamed across the UN system by understanding and systematically applying the principles underlying the concept of ComDev, and integrating these at all levels of decision-making and project implementation. UN agencies – from policy-makers to project-implementers – need to acknowledge that ComDev is a process that facilitates the engagement of individuals, communities and organizations to enable sustainable development through interpersonal, inter-organizational or mediated communication. This paper recommends that UN agencies formalise the integration of ComDev principles in development policies, and institutionalize processes and mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of ComDev into programmes and projects.

1 For further information on this, see UNDP 2011.



CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT: TOWARDS FOOD-SECURE AND RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS

This section examines some of the current trends and challenges in the battle against hunger, malnutrition, food-security and extreme poverty. In particular, it discusses how these challenges are interrelated and exacerbated by climate change and globalization, and highlights where these are currently being addressed throughout the development sector. It concludes by recommending that broad partnerships are required at all levels, especially with an emphasis on policy engagement, and provides suggestions where and how this can be operationalized using ComDev approaches.

2.1 ENDING HUNGER, MALNUTRITION AND EXTREME POVERTY: KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

2.1.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE AND HEALTH IN ERADICATING POVERTY

With the global population already more than 7 billion people and expected to increase by another 2.7 billion by the year 2050, there is still much to be done in order to optimize agricultural and health systems so they can provide food, nutrition and health security for all. In fact, FAO (2013b, p. 7) reports that agricultural output will need to expand by no less than 70 percent in order to meet the needs of the expected population in 2050. Those charged with developing sustainable agricultural policies and practice must ensure that any expansion of agricultural productivity takes into account rural livelihoods, food security and food safety of the world's poorest and most vulnerable. A strategic, integrated and participatory approach to agricultural, rural and urban development can address the challenges impeding the battle against rising food insecurity, malnutrition, health risks and extreme poverty. The realisation of this goal will no doubt involve small-scale farmers, and the challenges in the battle against hunger, poverty and nutrition need to be confronted through policies supporting their participation.



2.1.2 SMALL-SCALE FARMING AND THE 2014 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FAMILY FARMING

The 66th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 2011, passed a resolution designating 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF, 2013), recognising the pivotal role of small-scale farmers as primary stakeholders in the fight against extreme poverty and hunger. Despite abundant discussion on this topic, there remains no clear definition of what constitutes a small-scale farmer. In fact, this term is often arbitrarily interchanged with smallholder or family farmer. 'Small' may refer to the size of the farm's property, its economic value in terms of equity, its economic or agricultural output, or the number of workers (UNEP, 2013). FAO has defined family farming as 'A means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labour, including both women's and men's. The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, social and cultural functions' (FAO, 2013c). While often referring to the concept of family farming, when referring to individual farmers this paper will use the term small-scale farmer to reflect the level of production rather than the composition of ownership (as suggested by Murphy, 2013).

It is estimated there are approximately 450 million small-scale family farms globally, supporting a population of roughly 2 billion people (Singh, 2009, as cited in Murphy, 2013). Small-scale farmers hold a special position in agricultural societies that transcends the reductive framing of economic productivity. According to the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), small-scale farmers contribute to social cohesion through hiring local labour during peak farming periods and spending their income locally (UNEP, 2013, p. 11). They tend to manage diversified agricultural systems and hence preserve traditional food products and safeguard agro-biodiversity. Small-scale farmers are often stewards of diverse and contextual agricultural knowledge, and can address nutritional issues through their mix of commercial growing and home gardening (see Wenhold et al., 2007, cited in UNEP, 2013). Nonetheless, the simple fact remains that many of the world's poor and undernourished are themselves small-scale farmers.

The positive impacts and the vital role that small-scale farmers play in their local environments, as well as more widely across society, need to be central to policies initiated at the macro level by intergovernmental organizations and their partners in government, as well as across the non-governmental organization (NGO) sector. The pressures of globalization, including increasingly global markets, on small-scale farmers are of extreme importance and must be noted.

Rural development policies and programmes are well served by ComDev strategies that provide a driver for farmer participation in innovation adapted to small-scale family farms. Participatory communication processes are also needed to make the voices of





small-scale farmers heard in development policy and planning processes. Additionally, the role of communication in fostering indigenous and local knowledge systems, particularly in how it can be balanced with formal information and communication mechanisms, is considered another key element to be addressed when mainstreaming Com-Dev.

2.1.3 KEY BARRIERS TO ERADICATING HUNGER, MALNUTRITION AND EXTREME POVERTY

Access to resources and markets remains a key challenge for many in the global South, especially for small-scale farmers, who often fail to meet the volume or quality demanded by a globalized market (Murphy, 2010, p. 11). Small-scale farmers have certain market advantages, however, which should be better supported. For example, the World Bank (2007, p. 12) notes that the high-value markets for domestic consumption are the fastest growing agricultural markets in developing countries. Likewise, UNEP (2013, p. 38) highlights the potential advantages small-scale farmers have if their goods are integrated into the high-value market chain. Supporting the participation of small-scale farmers in these markets must therefore be a priority.

Natural hazards threaten agriculture, especially among vulnerable small-scale farmers in the developing world, and cannot be decoupled from climate change. Adaptations of current practices need to be made in response to the challenges presented by natural hazards, many of which are intensified by climate change. In this regard, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) (2009, p. 1) notes that while consumers based in the global North may be relatively unscathed by these disasters, “millions of people in developing countries face a very real and direct threat to their food security and livelihoods”.

The challenges presented by food crises and soaring food prices – often resulting from natural disasters or social conflicts, both of which are themselves threats to the battle against hunger, malnutrition and extreme poverty – “tilt public budgets and donor priorities toward direct provision of food rather than investments in growth and achieving food security through rising incomes” (World Bank, 2007, p. 7, see also Hossain Green, 2011). Unanticipated price fluctuations resulting from the globalized food system can threaten the already fragile livelihoods of small-scale farmers, who are often unable to wait for the best prices. Selling at below profitable prices pushes people into poverty and prevents those already in extreme poverty from escaping (UNEP, 2013, p. 12). Murphy (2010, p. 11) notes that “small-scale farmers face obvious disadvantages in this emerging centralised and globalized system; they lack the capital and organization that the system demands, they find it hard to meet volume and quality demands, and, often, they are far from the markets they need to access and therefore relatively powerless”.



An ageing population, particularly those who depend on agriculture for their livelihood, is increasingly becoming a global issue. People are living longer, with worldwide life expectancy increasing by three years in the last decade alone (FAO, 2013a, p. 4). An ageing population puts added stress on already overburdened agricultural systems in the developing world, which is also being affected by the growing trend of rural to urban migration. Indeed, the migration from the farm to the megacity is a trend in the developing world that cannot be ignored, especially from the perspective of food security and resilience. The year 2008 marked the world's urban population surpassing its rural population for the first time in human history (FAO, 2013a). Agricultural growth, even in agriculture-based economies, remains lacklustre, while service and industry capture greater proportions of GDP. The World Bank attributes this stagnant growth to governmental policies and underinvestment, “reflecting a political economy in which urban interests have the upper hand” (2007, p. 7). The privileging of urban interests while marginalising agricultural interests at the policy level needs to be addressed.

Continuing gender imbalances also must be urgently addressed, with gaps in equity remaining in decision-making processes as well as in access to goods and services. Despite this, women play a crucial role in the production of food and cash crops, especially in the small-scale farm systems, where they make up the majority of small-scale farmers (UNEP, 2013, p. 10). Any policy or programme designed to successfully engage with small-scale farmers must seriously consider addressing this gender imbalance.

The role of ComDev in addressing these barriers will be discussed throughout this paper. A point to emphasize here, however, is the need to approach these problems in an integrated and transdisciplinary way in order to address overall livelihood improvement and ensure synergies of different sectorial initiatives. This will require more inter-institutional partnerships and collaboration, which ComDev can provide the necessary mechanisms for.

2.1.4 SHIFTING DEVELOPMENT PARADIGMS

Perhaps there is benefit in taking a closer look at development, however cursory, and considering how and why international and local development actors have been unsuccessful thus far in realising the UN's vision of creating a world free of hunger and malnutrition. Asking pointed questions about why a case for ComDev to be mainstreamed within development policies and programmes still needs to be made today will help identify and articulate what the real barriers to participation are.

The 20th century saw an increase in crop production, particularly through the use of improved varieties and artificial fertilizers and pesticides. The techniques of what is now referred to as the Green Revolution, particularly the breeding of improved



varieties of wheat and rice and the expanded use of chemicals in agricultural practice, were adopted extensively by small-scale farmers and are credited with a boost in agricultural output and a reduction of undernourished people (IFPRI, 2002).

The achievements of the Green Revolution came at significant environmental cost, as the burden of growth was externalised and placed primarily on the environment (UNEP, 2013, p. 8). A call has subsequently been made for a paradigm shift, specifically in relation to agriculture (see Key Messages, UNCTAD, 2013). In recognition of the important role of small-scale farmers, a transition from the Green Revolution approach to an ecological intensification and sustainability approach is needed in agricultural development. According to the Trade and Environment Review (2013, p. i), this alternative paradigm “implies a rapid and significant shift from conventional, monoculture-based and high-external-input-dependent industrial production towards mosaics of sustainable, regenerative production systems that also considerably improve the productivity of small-scale farmers”.

One can reasonably question, in an effort to interrogate structural, organizational and political barriers, why a resolution declaring 2014 the Year of Family Farming is happening several decades after the Green Revolution. Yet the emerging recognition of the role and capacity of small-scale family farmers in maintaining production and preserving natural resources is a result of a shift in thinking that has not yet penetrated far into the entrenched structures of major stakeholder organizations. Rogers’ (1962) diffusion of innovations approach to development, prominent throughout the Green Revolution, still seems to dominate, resulting in service systems promoting one-size-fits-all solutions to primarily increase production, whereas numerous publications indicate the need for context specific and adaptive solutions to support sustainable development (see, for example, Van de Fliert, 2014). Alternative and more holistic paradigms, such as those advocated in this paper, do exist but tend to remain just that: alternatives. Requiring indicators for success that extend beyond economic ones, they have yet to be integrated, other than piecemeal, into the overall strategies and programmes of organizations. A perspective worthy of consideration, and very much the substance of this paper, is the notion of voice as a value. Couldry (2010, p. 1) believes that we are facing a crisis in the way we value voice – a crisis that has been expanding for the past three decades.

“Treating voice as a value means discriminating in favour of ways of organising human life and resources that, through their choices, put the value of voice into practice, by respecting the multiple interlinked processes of voice and sustaining them, not undermining or denying them.”

- Couldry, 2010, p.2



Approaches to development that can place greater value on voice, such as ComDev, need to be mainstreamed. Rather than viewing these approaches as an end in and of themselves, positioned within the boundaries of the current paradigm, they should be viewed as a means to value voice within all programmes, indicative of a new paradigm. Anderson, Brown and Jean (2012) emphasize that this paradigmatic shift can only occur when three instruments have been engaged: resources, procedures and policies. Providers of aid and assistance, including UN agencies, develop these policies and, as such, are not only able to change them, but have the agency to bring out sustainable and lasting change. Not naïve to the reality of international development and its tethering to politics, Anderson et al. (2012, p. 139) argue that “even though policies may be tied to fixed, non-negotiable political positions, the applications of policies in different places would vary to fit those contexts without inadvertent negative impacts”. The recurring assertion of the need for a paradigm shift, both in UN publications (see UNCTAD, 2013) and in the views of practitioners within the system (see Anderson, et al., 2012; Quarry and Ramirez, 2009), indicates that the time is now ripe for policy-transforming action. The mainstreaming of ComDev in development policy and strategy can create a platform for this paradigmatic transformation by providing recognition of voice at all levels, a space for negotiation of direction and mechanisms for sustainable and adaptive change, and access to information and engagement processes for better location-specific decision-making.

2.2 MAJOR DEVELOPMENT RESPONSES DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE FOOD-SECURE AND RESILIENT RURAL LIVELIHOODS

Recent major development responses, particularly following the 2008 global financial crisis (GFC), have been aimed at achieving food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods. FAO’s strategic objectives, for example, emphasize an alignment of policies, programmes and investments. Noteworthy among FAO’s recent initiatives is their emphasis on South-South collaboration. The FAO South-South Cooperation Programme¹, for instance, primarily focuses its objectives at the national level, aiming to promote the exchange and uptake of knowledge, technologies and good practices across all levels, and to contribute to informed advocacy and communication in food security and nutrition (FAO, 2014). This uptake will be supported by a number of global, regional and national platforms such as the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition².

This has corresponded with a resounding call for greater interagency collaboration, which can be seen through a number of global initiatives. The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development³, created in 2003, is a network of 37 international NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, and development organizations. According to the Platform’s website, “Members share a common vision that agriculture and rural

1 See www.fao.org/southsouthcooperation
2 See www.fao.org/fsnforum
3 See www.donorplatform.org



development is central to poverty reduction, and a conviction that sustainable and efficient development requires a coordinated global approach.” With an emphasis on collaboration and cooperation, members work together to achieve their common goal of reducing poverty and enhancing sustainable economic growth in rural areas (see GDPRD, 2013). The FAO and the World Bank are both Platform members; together they work with other members to address the effectiveness of aid and exchange evidence-based knowledge.

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS)¹, established in 1974, is an intergovernmental body under the auspices of the UN to serve as a forum for member-states to address issues related to food security. CFS was reformed in 2009 with the goal of becoming the most inclusive and international stakeholder panel addressing food security and nutrition. Through their recent 2012 Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, CFS aims to promote global, regional and national collaboration in order to prevent future food crises and eliminate hunger.

Grassroots partnerships also exist to support resilience, such as the Partners for Resilience (PfR) alliance². PfR uses an integrated approach across the programmes of their member organizations in order to support resilience against natural disasters, which can undermine food security and cause hunger and malnutrition. Through coordinated climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction projects initiated by partner agencies, PfR is able to contribute to the resilience of communities and the ecosystems they depend on for their livelihood. The alliance uses a combined approach of developing community-led programmes using media-based tools, such as participatory video, and engaging government and civil society actors.

Despite these international alliances, global networks and collaborative projects, the celebratory tone present throughout much of the grey literature on these initiatives can still be perplexing. It can be argued that collaborative efforts to promote food-secure and resilient livelihoods have so far fallen short of their goals. While the successes of these well-intentioned partnerships must be acknowledged, there are still vital gaps which need to be overcome. As evidenced by the sweeping partnerships with their soaring goals, the political will for interagency collaboration exists, so at what point in the delivery chain is it breaking down? Why have development actors not always been successful in reaching the “last mile” where efforts are needed most? Suarez, Benn and Macklin (2011) attribute this to “current inequities in the patterns of flow and use of information [that] make it very difficult for national and sub-national governments, humanitarian and development organizations and other stakeholders”.

1 See www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/global-strategic-framework/en

2 See www.partnersforresilience.nl/about-us/Paginas/home.aspx





Anderson et al. (2012) argue that obstacles are most pronounced at the level of engagement. The space where development actually takes place, in engagement and interaction with local people, is also the space where development agencies can paradoxically be at their most awkward. The authors suggest that engagement often fails because of constraints related to time, access, presence, resources, a lack of specific skills and cultural understanding on the part of development workers, and inadequate evaluation (Anderson et al., 2012, pp. 126–132). The listening and problem-solving skills that development agents need to foster require time and patience and are sure to be very context specific. Because of a dearth of this sort of expertise, development actors tend to favour “passive participation” over “active participation” (Anderson et al., 2012, p. 131). Not uncommonly, performance indicators as determined by organizational policies or donor requirements do not favour a participatory and transdisciplinary mode of operation by individual staff or by the organization as a whole.



Mongolia

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This gap at the point of engagement can be bridged, largely because it is structural and organizational in nature and therefore within the control of the development community. Bridging this gap at the space of community engagement should also have a ripple effect upon all interrelated elements of the development chain; it involves an adoption of principles at all levels to be effective, rather than working in isolation at the point when projects meet their ‘beneficiaries’. The role of ComDev at this intersection is significant and, fortunately, with an established track record, there are many lessons to be learned from both successes and failures of ComDev initiatives. Bringing these principles behind ComDev to the fore in order to mainstream ComDev across policy and practice is a key objective of this paper.

Through an understanding of the strengths and limitations of ComDev, and a review of the successes and failures ComDev initiatives have faced – either as stand-alone projects or in support of other initiatives – recommendations can be made to direct the future role of ComDev towards a position of greater prominence within policies and programmes. The next chapter will explore in depth the principles and current practice of ComDev, and feature some recent initiatives in which ComDev has been used to support food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods. This review of the lessons learned will lead to recommendations for greater mainstreaming going forward.



CHAPTER 3

EXPLORING THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF COMDEV: AN UPDATE

This section revisits the key principles and functions of ComDev in achieving development aims and how they can be applied to the policies and practices of UN agencies. It will then examine some recent initiatives which explored how ComDev can support food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods, particularly focusing on key trends and players within the sector, as well as partnerships and projects that emerged from this process. Finally, it will review some of the lessons learned from these programmes.

3.1 PRINCIPLES AND KEY FUNCTIONS OF COMDEV

3.1.1 REVISITING COMDEV PRINCIPLES

As discussed earlier in this paper, each UN agency differs in its terminology and implementation of ComDev, for historical and practical reasons. Indeed, this is representative of a wider debate regarding definitions and terminological differences surrounding the field. As such, it may be more productive and useful to revisit the key principles and functions of ComDev to ensure they are aligned across the UN system. In particular, ComDev should be viewed as more than the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), public relations or media, but rather as a strategy to facilitate the engagement of individuals, communities and organizations to enable sustainable development through interpersonal, inter-organizational or mediated communication. There are four key principles that are consistently identified across the UN agencies as essential for ComDev to be successful: dialogue, advocacy, participation and purpose (UNDP, 2011; UNDP and The World Bank, 2009). These are discussed in detail below.



Dialogue, in this context, refers to two-way communication, particularly among key stakeholders, as opposed to top-down or one-directional communication models (Dutta, 2011; Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009; Quarry and Ramirez, 2009). Dialogue should be viewed as a stream or flow of shared meaning, out of which new understandings may develop (Bohm, 2004). ComDev approaches can provide a platform for facilitated dialogue, whether interpersonal, inter-group or mediated, and should always include a listening element, as this can ensure a common understanding of the issue or action to be taken (Beltran, 1979). In particular, ComDev should go beyond mere information dissemination; it should address the implications of utilizing information and facilitate stakeholder dialogue, thus empowering individuals or groups to take control of their own development (FAO, 2014a). This facilitated dialogue may occur through interpersonal interaction, or through mediated communication channels. For example, e-Agriculture¹, is an online global community with more than 10 000 members from over 160 countries and territories. The online platform allows individuals and institutions to exchange ideas, information and resources, particularly in relation to how ICTs can help with sustainable agriculture and rural development. Discussion topics are demand-driven and facilitate knowledge exchange between UN agencies, governments, universities, farmers' organizations and the wider community. Yet participation requires internet access, and so much of the input remains from institutions rather than directly from small-scale farmers in the global South.

ComDev policies and programmes should include a connection to ensuring peoples' rights, or an advocacy element (UNDP, 2011). This may be through empowering local citizens to claim their rights, particularly by focusing on governance, as well as influencing the political climate, altering the public perception of social norms, or empowering individuals or groups to seek change in power relations (UNDP, 2011, p. 8). UNICEF, in collaboration with INGO Terre des Hommes, attempted to implement a youth community project in Kosovo to encourage young people, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, to engage with the political process and become involved in community development decisions. Consultation with more than 100 young people and community leaders helped to identify barriers to youth engagement with public life in Kosovo, and to develop solutions for mitigating these issues, thus advocating for greater governance. While the project was successful in communities that already had willing youth, many young people and their communities were reluctant to become involved. In some cases, the project actually aggravated tensions and caused small conflicts (UNICEF Innovation, 2013). Thus, while advocacy is an important aspect of ComDev approaches, it is important to consider societal and other factors during the planning and implementation process. One way to do this is to ensure high levels of participation by local individuals or groups.



Effective ComDev therefore requires active participation; that is, working with key stakeholders to enact change. This requires an all-inclusive approach, which must involve stakeholders at local, regional and national levels (L'Aquila, 2009). Solutions need to be tailored to the specific needs of local communities, ecosystems and environments, and must be chosen and enacted by the local people, as research has shown that development policies and programmes are more successful when they are driven by the involved stakeholders (CGIAR, 2009; Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009; Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009). Well-planned communication mechanisms are needed to facilitate this participation, and should involve interpersonal communication methods, which can be effectively assisted by mediated methods. For instance, participatory video and digital storytelling – which allow stakeholder groups to express their perceptions, needs or visions through the use of video or still images – have become popular ways to amplify voice for those who may otherwise not be heard. But to reach their full potential, these methods need to be accompanied by the facilitation of a participatory communication process to genuinely engage local users in decision-making processes about content, framing and distribution. Unfortunately, in practice many of the final decisions about process and product are often still made by donors or other institutions, rather than the rights-holders, thus undermining the potential of participation (see, for example, Reitmaier, Bidwell and Marsden, 2011; Rahim, 2012).

Finally, ComDev should be purposeful, and thus requires planned and intentional actions aimed at enacting social change (Kincaid and Figueroa, 2009; Quarry and Ramirez, 2009; Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009). Thus, dialogue should be purposeful, with the intention of developing, and later implementing, activities to achieve collectively agreed solutions (Bessette, 2004). Many programs claiming to be ComDev are largely employed to achieve a previously donor or institutionally determined aim, rather than a process driven by local communities or stakeholders. The SUBIR-CARE initiative, a USAID-funded programme that encourages the adoption of positive environmental behaviours in Ecuador, is a good example of this. It was broadly based on the assumption that if the target population had a better understanding of the long-term values of environmental conservation, particularly economic implications, then they would be more likely to be an active force in preventing incursions or abuse by others (such as loggers or oil companies). In developing its approach, the organization implemented a participatory process to identify and target specific behaviours through effective communication. A series of workshops were held, involving national, regional and local project staff from a range of backgrounds to first identify the ideal behaviours for each component of the project. Once these behaviours had been identified, research by structured observations and in-depth interviews was conducted with the target population to determine why or why not these behaviours were not currently being implemented. From this information, the project team developed effective strategies to encourage those who were currently not implementing the ideal behaviours to change their behaviour.

While the SUBIR-CARE example demonstrates purposeful actions, the purpose of the project was still largely top-down and externally motivated, rather than driven by the rights-holders and affected groups.



Vietnam
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3.1.2 KEY COMDEV FUNCTIONS IN DEVELOPMENT

There are two key considerations that UN agencies must address before they can effectively mainstream ComDev, the need of which has been illustrated above. First and foremost, UN agencies should promote local access to resources and information, and ensure social inclusion. This has been repeatedly raised during previous UNRTs. For example, the X UNRT noted that “in the UN system, communication tends to be viewed in relation to channelling information downstream to promote specific mandates, methods and policy-related agendas, as well as to build public image and visibility and support for fundraising” (UNDP and The World Bank, 2009, p. 28). By involving local rights-holders and other stakeholders in this way, UN agencies can help to strengthen local governance, and ensure rural people have both a voice and equitable access to resources.



The second key function that ComDev can contribute to UN policies and programmes is the facilitation of exchange and collaboration among stakeholders, through building on local knowledge, enhancing interest and capabilities to participate in development processes, and working in partnership with local organizations. To date, many agencies and development institutions have failed to recognize the value of engaging rights-holders in key decision-making (Agunga, 2012). By developing better relationships and effective partnerships with grassroots and local organizations, UN agencies can ensure their policies and programmes are positively affecting the world's most vulnerable and poor, and can effectively support food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods.

In particular, the UN can work towards mainstreaming the principles identified in section 3.1.1 through all development projects that they support or coordinate, not just the ones specified as ComDev. These can be achieved through the effective mainstreaming of ComDev with policy dialogue and practice, particularly around the following three themes:

- a) Supporting citizens with the tools they need to influence policies.
- b) Closing the communication gap to build resilient livelihoods.
- c) Enabling equitable growth and inclusive social development.

Case studies highlighting these themes are explored in more depth in the Appendix.

3.2 RECENT COMDEV APPROACHES, TRENDS AND KEY PLAYERS SUPPORTING FOOD-SECURE AND RESILIENT RURAL LIVELIHOODS

The inclusion or involvement of ComDev practices across the development sector is certainly not new. ComDev tools and methods have been used as part of a mediation process, a tool for encouraging dialogue, a local communication and information dissemination system, and an empowerment or capacity-building method, just to identify a few. Experience has demonstrated that development initiatives that incorporate ComDev principles (especially those highlighted in section 3.1.1) are more successful than those which either use ComDev tools as an isolated activity, or not at all (Coldevin, 2003). Nonetheless, approaches or methods involving ComDev, or claiming to involve ComDev, remain separated from other development initiatives. The following sections highlight recent approaches and key players in the field, while case studies developed by regional experts of notable ComDev initiatives in the Asia and Pacific, Africa and Latin America regions are provided in the Appendix to this paper.



3.2.1 RECENT COMDEV TRENDS AND APPROACHES

There are six current trends or approaches in which ComDev is currently being utilized in international development, with varying degrees of success. These are participatory communication, community media, information and communication technologies (ICTs), traditional media, participatory video and photography, and communication rights¹.

Participatory communication is a buzzword often used interchangeably with stakeholder engagement (Leal, 2010). It requires strategic planning of a suite of communication functions and methods to effectively facilitate engagement that allows genuine participation at all levels. Participatory communication draws heavily on the principles outlined in section 3.1.1, particularly through the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences between people or groups (Dagron, 2009). While this method draws heavily on the participation principle, it is often used as a tool for a specific purpose, rather than an approach that informs and gives voice to all stakeholders in all phases of the development programme cycle.

Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) is one method under this approach that has grown in popularity over the past few decades. It encourages dialogue between and among local stakeholders and development workers to ensure a mutually agreeable plan for action. In particular, PRCA utilizes field-based visualization techniques, interviews and group work with the aim of generating effective programmes, materials, media and methods (Anyaeibunam, Mefalopulos and Moetsabi, 2004). In doing so, it aims to encourage local ownership of the development process.

PRCA was central to the development of the Rural and Agricultural Development Communication Network (RADCON)², a community-based information network developed through a 2004 partnership between FAO and the Egyptian Ministry for Agriculture and Land Resources, with funding from the Italian government (UNDP, 2011). The network aimed to meet the needs of rural communities in Egypt, particularly farmers in the northern areas. As such, PRCA was seen as vital to the planning and implementation aspects of the initiative.

The methods and tools employed through the PRCA approach included public meetings, printed materials and mass media. In particular, these communication tools were used to promote awareness about RADCON, as well as to identify the needs of the participants. While the implementation process included capacity-building and open discussion, there was little diagnostic analysis about whether this project was appropriate

1 While we acknowledge there are other ways in which ComDev principles are being used, these six trends have been identified as the most prominent and thus this paper has been restricted to these. This section does not go into depth debating the benefits or challenges of each of the different trends, as this has been addressed elsewhere.
2 See www.radcon.sci.eg





and suitable for the targeted areas, or whether it was the best way to meet the needs of the rural farmers. In addition, there was a lack of equal representation of all stakeholders, including women and youth, private sector and civil society.

Community media, particularly community radio that has been well-established worldwide, has the potential to enable isolated communities to voice their concerns and access information otherwise inaccessible to them (Madamombe, 2005). It has long been a tool for community-led development and social change, particularly in Latin America and Africa. Community radio can be used to address a variety of issues, including poverty, gender inequality, education, health and agriculture. While illiteracy, geographical isolation and lack of access to information continue to form barriers for many rural communities, radio broadcasting can be a viable alternative.



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The first rural community radio in Bangladesh, Krishi Radio, was established in 2011 by FAO and the Agricultural Information Service (AIS) under the Bangladesh Ministry of Agriculture, in partnership with the Bangladesh NGO Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC) and the University of the Philippines Los Baños (BNNRC, 2014; ComDev, 2012). The radio station, which broadcasts in the local language of Barisal, discusses a range of topics including agriculture, fishing, livestock, climate change and health. Many of the 40 000 listeners access the radio station using mobile phones or a radio (ComDev, 2012). Krishi Radio was designed to enhance rural communication services across Bangladesh, to develop lasting partnerships and to promote links between stakeholders. While stakeholder participation, networking and mutual learning were identified as vital to the implementation, Krishi Radio is not immune to the challenges



that afflict many community radio stations (ComDev, 2011). These include reliance on volunteers, lack of technical skills and limited opportunities for training, all of which threaten the sustainability of the initiative (BNNRC, 2014).

The incorporation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in development initiatives is a growing trend across the development sector that has not yet reached its peak. ICTs can provide valuable platforms for information exchange, education and training, collaborative partnerships and advocacy (FAO, 2012; Meera, Jhamtani and Rao, 2004; Rao, 2007). The use of ICTs, however, is often viewed as the ultimate aim of a ComDev project, rather than a tool that can be utilized to achieve the principles identified in section 3.1.1. Additionally, ICTs come with hidden cost and the need for minimum technical skills to operationalize them. Ultimately, these may serve as barriers to the many poor and illiterate farmers. The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), for instance, developed an online portal¹ to provide information on rice production. Yet many local farmers did not possess the necessary technical skills to be able to access and share information through the portal, nor did they own personal computers. Therefore the portal was not used to its full potential (Manalo, 2012). In response, PhilRice attempted to include farmers' children who are more ICT literate as 'info-mediaries', although not many see themselves having a future as farmer.

The incorporation of traditional media in development initiatives has proven successful in many cases, particularly in communities with oral cultures and low literacy levels. Participatory theatre, in particular, has been used as a cultural medium by many agencies aimed at affecting social and behavioural change. UNICEF, for example, incorporated theatre as part of its "Hang Up Your Nets" campaign in Ghana (Logan, 2012). The campaign encourages people to sleep beneath insecticide-treated nets to prevent malaria. Alongside radio campaigns, UNICEF partnered with local community theatre groups to develop interactive plays about the life-saving benefits of using these nets, which encourage local participation and aim to do more than just create awareness.

Participatory video and photography is another trend that has become increasingly popular with the availability and ease of digital video and still cameras, as well as access to mobile phones with camera-enabled features. Participatory video and photography can be used for a range of purposes including, but not limited to, education, training, advocacy, knowledge-sharing and the protection of cultural heritage. Participatory video was used in northern Guyana, for instance, to investigate the link between local indigenous livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. Local researchers partnered with UK-based participatory video NGO Insightshare to encourage local communities to share their views authentically through the use of video, and to create an immediate and accessible form of dissemination. Training was first conducted through participatory video workshops with local community researchers, who then selected and



interviewed other members of the community (Mistry and Beradi, 2012). Post-project, some of the individuals have continued to include participatory video in their village-based projects or funding proposals, however equipment cost and maintenance continues to be a barrier.

ComDev is also currently being utilized in development through the promotion of communication rights and by right to information movements. Many developing nations now have legislation requiring local governments and organizations to provide timely and affordable access to information, including land ownership. The digitalization of land records under the Indian National Land Records Modernization Programme, for instance, is having a significant impact on the livelihoods of much of India's rural poor. By increasing transparency, the programme aims to create avenues for farmers to directly access information about their land, minimize disputes and hopefully reduce corruption (Goswami, 2013).

In different ways, all of these approaches have the potential to alleviate poverty and support food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods by:

- a)** Supporting citizens with the tools they need to influence policies, such as access to information or the creation of media for advocacy;
- b)** Closing the communication gap to build resilient livelihoods through information exchange via mass media, traditional media, ICTs and interpersonal communication; and
- c)** Enabling equitable growth and inclusive social development through open dialogue.

Nonetheless, these initiatives often stand in isolation as specific 'ICT4D', 'Community Radio' or 'Theatre for Change' projects, rather than as part of a holistic development approach underpinned and supported by ComDev principles and methods to address poverty alleviation and improve livelihoods. This tends to be the result of specific sectorial or disciplinary mandates that exist within organizations. Much stronger interagency partnerships are needed to develop more integrated agendas and collaborative implementation plans addressing the overall improvement of livelihood and resilience.



3.2.2 KEY PLAYERS IN UTILIZING AND IMPLEMENTING COMDEV PRINCIPLES

The number of players and their contribution to the expansion and use of ComDev to facilitate development process has increased over the past years. Today, many development organizations, NGOs, academic and research institutions, as well as government institutions in developing countries, are acknowledging the importance of ComDev in facilitating people's participation and ownership in bringing about long-term and sustainable development. University of the Philippines Los Baños, The University of Queensland, University of Reading, University of Guelph and Ohio University, for instance, are all involved in research, teaching and engagement initiatives relating to ComDev. Most NGOs incorporate ComDev methods in their work, and only some, such as Insightshare¹, are fully devoted to providing ComDev services to client organizations.



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In terms of UN organizations, FAO, UNICEF and UNESCO have been at the forefront of incorporating ComDev into their development policies and practice, especially through the use of media to create awareness (Balit, 2012). FAO has also been actively involved as partners in the establishment of online knowledge platforms designed to facilitate learning, knowledge-sharing and the promotion of innovative ComDev initiatives in rural agricultural development (see, for example, www.ccomdev.org; www.e-agriculture.org). UNICEF², UNESCO³ and the World Bank⁴ have similarly been leaders in the field of ComDev, often utilizing participatory communication tools and media to achieve their development aims. UNICEF has invested substantially in capacity-building by commissioning an 18-week competency-based training programme on ComDev to a large number of staff in regional and programme offices since 2011. FAO initiated an interagency training programme in 2014. UNESCO supports a wide spectrum of media development interventions to strengthen capabilities, facilitate pluralism and promote inclusive knowledge societies, within its mandate on communication and free flow of information. Such capacity-building within organizations and among their partners is vital to the mainstreaming of ComDev.

1 See www.insightshare.org

2 See, for example, www.comunit.com/unicef-global/node/322963

3 See, for example, www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information

4 See, for example, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDEVCOMMENG/Resources/devcommwhatwedo.pdf>

The FAO ComDev team coordinated an expert consultation in September 2011 to discuss the role of ComDev to support rural development, key areas for intervention, challenges and opportunities, as well as how to enhance ComDev’s impact on agricultural development (FAO, 2012, p. 6). The three-day gathering, involving 32 international experts from UN agencies, NGOs, universities, national rural institutions and global communication networks, formulated some key recommendations, which included the need for “establishment of facilitated ComDev networks that involve practitioners, academicians and stakeholders at national and international levels, in order to connect theory, research and practice, and systematically improve standards of development programs” (FAO, 2012). To realise this in practice, however, requires not only the willingness and capacity of individuals, but also institutional policies and structures that favour a transdisciplinary approach to development.



Timor Leste

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3.3 REVIEWING LESSONS LEARNED

Overall, while ComDev has been widely accepted and promoted within the international development community as vital to policy and practice, ComDev activities or components remain, in many cases, isolated and not effectively integrated into the design, implementation and evaluation of development programmes and policies. Many ComDev initiatives constitute a project with a limited life span and no exit strategy to ensure continued engagement. The most successful and sustainable ComDev projects are built on public-private partnerships, have established local leadership, apply a fully integrated approach, have a specific designated budget line for ComDev, or are placed in larger development programmes. Some of these successful initiatives are described in the regional case studies in the Appendix.



Opportunities for specific or localized projects and programmes, as well as broader communication processes and practices clearly exist (FAO, 2012). Regardless of the definition of ComDev, the key principles identified at the beginning of this section must be mainstreamed and embedded across international development policy and practice. By doing so, agencies can continue to find new and innovative ways to build resilience to the spikes of climate change, improve access to information through rural communication systems – including community-based rural radio and ICTs – and encourage social inclusion. This need for mainstreaming ComDev is regularly and urgently stressed at many interagency discussions and debates, and yet the goal remains elusive.

Considering the increasing challenges of food security and malnutrition, compounded by a rapidly changing climate and a volatile global market, the need for a more creative and holistic approach centred in ComDev principles is inevitable. Many small-scale farmers have proven to be innovative and resilient under difficult conditions, yet to achieve food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods, agencies need to harness the active participation of these rights-holders and become an integral to the broader development policy of institutions or organizations that target these communities. The only way to achieve this is through mainstreaming ComDev through development policy and practice.

In general, institutionalization can take different forms at different levels depending on the existing organizational structures. In the UN system, the institutionalization of ComDev remains significantly divergent with the influence of multiple actors. This is evidenced by a survey conducted in 2008–2009 involving UN agency staff. According to the outcome of this survey, the institutionalization of ComDev across the UN system is influenced by multiple factors including the discretion of project and programme managers, good practices, criteria for overall planning and mandate from formal policy (UNDP and World Bank, 2009).

Weak institutional capacities and lack of adequate human and physical resources are considered among the major impediments that are militating against proper institutionalization of ComDev. Organizations coming closest to a widespread application of ComDev principles and practices have displayed substantial efforts to systematically capacity-build their staff and partners, particularly around communication and facilitation skills, tools and approaches. Nonetheless, ComDev professionals often remain isolated, working as a separate department with a focus on specific projects rather than as a mandate for wider institutionalization and incorporation of ComDev principles across the sector. As such, while the importance and value of ComDev has been widely acknowledged, lack of institutional commitment, capacity and resources continue to form barriers for mainstreaming ComDev across developmental policy.



Another barrier towards institutionalizing ComDev within the UN system and beyond is the limited opportunity for collective action among agencies due to sectorial structures. This undermines the need to capture the potential contribution of ComDev in supporting livelihood-based development. While previous UNRT discussions may have addressed these barriers (UNDP and World Bank, 2011), it is perplexing to know that ComDev is still often considered as the fifth wheel on the wagon; it can easily be removed in case of uncertainty and is a welcome but non-vital addition. The extent to which the recommendations arising from previous UNRTs have been implemented and led to impact is not always clear. Admittedly, organizational restructuring or difficult financial uncertainty in the recent history of some organizations, such as FAO and the World Bank, caused well-established ComDev units to intermittently lose visibility or suffer a considerable loss in budget (Balit, 2012; UN, 2009). The review of key initiatives and players indicates that a combination of a strong specialised ComDev unit in an organization with widespread capacity-building in basic ComDev methods and skills among staff and partners provides a good basis for mainstreaming. To operationalize this, strong policy and institutional support will need to be in place first.





CHAPTER 4

LOOKING FORWARD: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES TO INSTITUTIONALIZE COMDEV

This section suggests how ComDev could be better utilized and institutionalized in future development initiatives. Firstly, it discusses how agencies and governments could better harness the potential of ComDev. It will then examine how UN agencies could form strategic and effective partnerships with each other, and with governments, civil society, NGOs and other social movements. Finally, it will provide recommendations for mainstreaming ComDev across the UN, to be further discussed at the XIII UNRT on ComDev.

4.1 HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL OF COMDEV

As has been demonstrated throughout the previous section, there are several ComDev approaches that UN agencies and other development institutions have used to address food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods. These range from community media and ICTs through to communication rights and participatory communication processes.

As can be seen from previous examples, the potential of ComDev has been recognized by leading organizations and governments around the world. The Alliance of the CGIAR Centres acknowledges that:



“The changes that are needed [to eradicate poverty] will be many and diverse. They will happen at the local level, tailored to local circumstances and ecosystems, and chosen and managed by the communities themselves... They will build on the wealth of knowledge that already exists, and the new directions that research must now take to meet this enormous challenge... We need to develop new and inventive responses to what is likely to be the most complex challenge that the world’s food production systems have ever faced. To do this, we need new ways of working, new non-traditional partnerships and truly integrated approaches. And we need much better communications between all stakeholders, so that decision-making at all levels is based on the best knowledge available.”

- CGIAR, 2009, pp.1-3

This concept is not new; the UNRTs on ComDev have discussed the potential of ComDev for furthering development aims for decades. And yet this potential, while widely recognized, has yet to be harnessed (FAO, 2012). Before ComDev can be mainstreamed across UN policies and programming, concrete strategies for utilizing ComDev effectively across the sector needs to be realised. Indeed, ComDev can be an invaluable resource to address many of the barriers to poverty alleviation (see section 2.1.3). By incorporating the key principles of dialogue, advocacy, participation and purpose (see section 3.1.1) across all development policies and practice, agencies can support small-scale farmers by providing access to resources and markets, assisting with disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation techniques, and addressing gender imbalances.

While the principles of ComDev can be implemented in a number of ways, it may be useful to examine the functions that ComDev methods and tools may support. ComDev specialists Wendy Quarry and Ricardo Ramirez (2009, pp. 65-66), build on communication functions identified 15 years earlier by Niels Röling (1994) and suggest six different functions that can be used:

- Policy communication (making policies and rules known)
- Educational communication (sharing knowledge)
- Participatory communication (encouraging stakeholder voices)
- Advocacy communication (lobbying for change)
- Organizational communication (internal coordination)
- Public relations (promotion of brand or image to external bodies)



These have different purposes at different stages. For example, development initiatives often require public relations to obtain funding, both for the current initiative and for future programmes, while organizational communication ensures these funds are used effectively. Participatory communication may ensure a programme is appropriate for the intended purpose, while advocacy communication can lobby governmental organizations or other institutions to enforce lasting change. These new policies or laws are then shared with the wider public through policy communication. Educational communication often forms part of the programme itself, sharing knowledge or different ways of working. Each function has a different role to play at different stages, and all may inform different aspects of ComDev work. For example, the RADCOM initiative identified in section 3.2.1 demonstrates how ComDev was used primarily in educational and public relation functions, rather than effectively utilizing different communication functions.

Despite the vast potential of ComDev when utilizing these different functions, for many organizations, ‘communication’ remains synonymous with ‘public relations’ (Quarry and Ramirez, 2009, p. 66; Quarry and Ramirez, 2012, p. 127), and ‘ComDev’ remains aligned with ‘media products’. This is not to say that media products, such as community radio or ICTs, cannot form a very useful part of the ComDev process (see Figure 2 in section 4.3 for examples). Our argument remains that UN agencies and their partners should move away from viewing ComDev as isolated projects, and instead mainstream ComDev principles across all development initiatives as a platform that facilitates all phases of development. ComDev should be a process that facilitates the engagement of individuals, communities and organizations to enable sustainable development through interpersonal, inter-organizational or mediated communication. A prerequisite is that organizations adopt a more transdisciplinary and livelihood-based approach towards development, which requires interagency partnerships that are facilitated through ComDev processes. ComDev should be a part of the entire project process, from the initial issue identification and programme design through to evaluation and impact assessment.

By mainstreaming ComDev in this way, the potential of ComDev and its principles and key functions can be effectively realised in the fight to alleviate poverty.





4.2 OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMDEV COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

One of the key objectives for the XIII UNRT is to identify concrete opportunities for collaborative partnerships, particularly addressing food-security, resilient livelihoods and family farming. There is much that could be done to improve partnerships, both inter- and intra-agency, as well as with local groups and civil society. There is a long history across the sector of acknowledging the importance of partnerships to achieve development goals and alleviate poverty. Partnership is an evolving practice that needs to be understood not only as a tool for intervention, but also as a key component of any initiative, policy or programme, whether formal or informal. As such, working in partnership across UN agencies, governments, civil society, private sector and local social movements is pivotal to supporting food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods.

Many of the examples highlighted in sections 2.2 and 3.2.1 involve successful collaborative partnerships across various levels, including interagency, inter-governmental, and with local civil groups and NGOs. The partnership between FAO and the Egyptian ministry for Agriculture and Land Resources, for example, demonstrated the effectiveness of working with local governments, whereas working with local NGO networks contributed to the success of Krishi Radio. Partnerships such as these make it possible for stakeholders to mobilize and incorporate the best-available knowledge and practices. They can demonstrate how the UN system can effectively and sustainably contribute to global efforts to support food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods, and work towards alleviating poverty and eradicating hunger.

Indeed, the CGIAR (2009) identifies knowledge exchange networks as another potential avenue for collaboration. When considering the diverse and rapid effects of climate change on local agricultural processes, rapid information exchange between stakeholders becomes critical. For example, small-scale farmers in many parts of the world are now able to obtain up-to-date market prices, empowering them to sell goods and produce at current rates. Yet, while mobile phone technology promises many new and exciting opportunities for agricultural development, “institutional and infrastructural constraints do not allow farmers to take full advantage of this technology” (Goth, 2013). Information dissemination, while potentially useful, does not necessarily lead to sustained social change. A recent survey of 1 200 farmers in the Indo-Gangetic Plain in South Asia revealed that farmers were not receiving information of relevance to their situation and geographical location, and thus were not using available technology to its full potential (Goth, 2013). Knowledge exchange involves more than information dissemination – it requires ongoing collaboration with key stakeholders, including the rights-holders.





Agencies could better develop strategic collaborative partnerships with local stakeholders by building on existing communication strategies within local communities, rather than working from a supply-driven agenda. New mechanisms can be created to bridge the gap between information dissemination and interactive usage of the information. For example, rural radio systems may provide opportunities for engagement with local stakeholders and encourage ongoing and sustainable support for the initiative. There is increasing evidence that social change processes are most effective when local rights-holders are active in identifying problems, developing solutions and implementing change.

A global partnership has been widely acknowledged as central to achieving the Post-2015 Development Agenda (see United Nations, 2013; UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 2012). The UN High-Level Panel, which met in Bali in March 2013, said:

“We agreed on the need for a renewed Global Partnership that enables a transformative, people-centred and planet-sensitive development agenda which is realised through the equal partnership of all stakeholders. Such partnership should be based on the principles of equity, sustainability, solidarity, respect for humanity, and shared responsibilities in accordance with respective capabilities.”

- United Nations, 2013, p.3

This aligns with the findings of the 2011 FAO Expert Consultation on Communication for Development, which found that there was a strong need for greater collaboration and links between institutions committed to rural development and social change (FAO, 2012). These partnerships must not only be between UN agencies and governments, bilateral and multilateral institutions, but also with people living in poverty, civil society and indigenous and local communities, traditionally marginalised groups, the business community, academia and private philanthropic organizations (United Nations, 2013).

Through ComDev principles and functions, developing these partnerships can lead to entry points for UN agencies and other organizations to address the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (2012) identified that “culturally relevant communication initiatives are powerful tools to support social development interventions and empower families” (p. 26). As such, there is a strong need for an advocacy strategy to promote ComDev across the UN system and position the mainstreaming of ComDev as part of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.



4.3 MAINSTREAMING COMDEV IN POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

As discussed above, the Post-2015 Development Agenda provides a unique opportunity for mainstreaming ComDev in policies and practices addressing food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods at the global, regional and national levels. By systematically integrating ComDev at all levels, UN agencies can be confident they are designing, implementing and supporting programmes and policies that actively contribute to poverty alleviation. To do so, however, agencies need to be strategic about areas of intervention and entry points for ComDev in relevant programmes or policies. This section aims to provide guidance and concrete recommendations for how UN agencies can effectively mainstream ComDev.



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The need to strengthen and mainstream ComDev has been a recurring issue highlighted at the previous UNRTs on ComDev (FAO, 2014b). The previous two UNRTs addressed the three interrelated priorities for mainstreaming ComDev: advocacy with policy makers; monitoring and evaluation; and training ComDev specialists (FAO, 2014b). While the process for formulating and implementing a mainstreaming strategy has begun, it still has a long way to go.

Across the UN system, the differing priorities of multiple actors have proved a significant challenge to mainstreaming ComDev (UNDP and The World Bank, 2009). The different priorities and objectives of various agencies, departments, policies and programmes have all undermined interagency collaboration and effectively blocked attempts to mainstream ComDev across the UN system. Although this has been the focus of several previous discussions (see, for example, the XI UNRT), the barrier remains as high as ever.

The urgent challenge to mainstream ComDev is reminiscent of issues that arose around mainstreaming gender. The 1995 UN International Conference on Women in Beijing established that mainstreaming gender must be an international priority. Almost 20 years on, although the concept and meaning differs between institutions, “almost all international development organizations and governments have adopted gender mainstreaming in some form (Derbyshire, 2012, p. 406). The UK Gender and Development Network (GADN) argues that organizational capacity-building and influence on policy, programmes and partnerships are central to successful gender mainstreaming (Derbyshire, 2012), and the same could arguably apply to mainstreaming ComDev. Until sufficient institutional ComDev capacity has been established, it is unlikely that any strong influence on policy and programmes will occur, and ComDev’s full potential will not be realised.

Figure 1 identifies how ComDev is primarily being implemented across development programmes and policies. ComDev is mostly viewed as a separate activity or project, often isolated from the main or primary development initiative. Figure 1 reflects this inclusion of ComDev as a distinct component within the implementation phase of the development cycle. It should be noted that this example merely illustrates one of the many ways that ComDev can be positioned as a project within this cycle. Indeed, cases can be featured that demonstrate ComDev as a component within the diagnostic or planning stages, or occasionally cutting across multiple stages. The purpose of this example is to provide a point of reference from which the distinguishing features of the mainstreamed model (Figure 2) can be recognized.

In Figure 1, the ComDev circle can be considered a “mini-project” within the overall implementation activity. For an example of this model, let us look at the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) initiative, launched in 1998 by UNICEF and other partner organizations. The initiative established a key goal of reducing global malaria deaths to nearly zero by 2015.

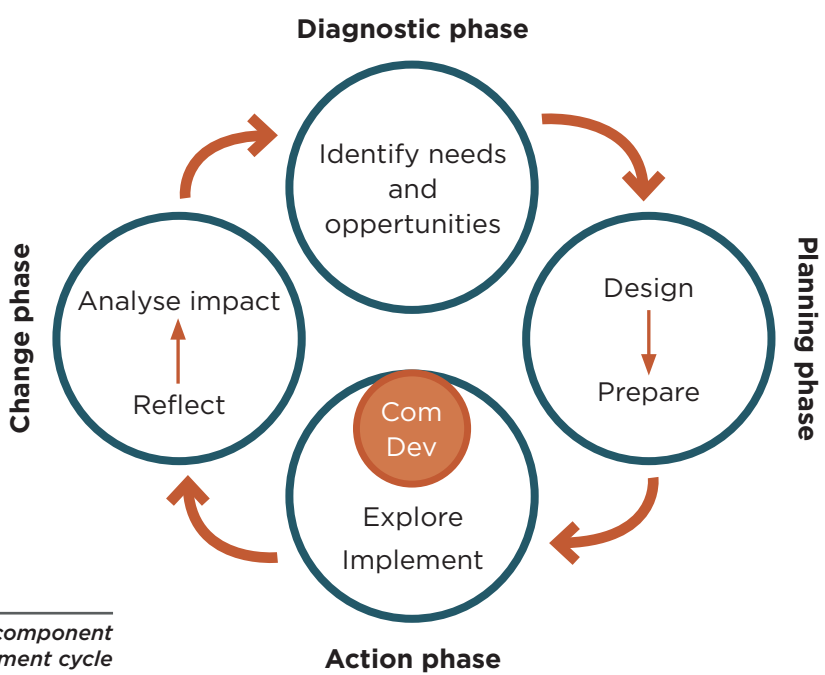


Figure 1: ComDev as a component within the development cycle



UNICEF supports this goal programme through the strengthening of health systems and malaria case management, and the promotion of Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) and Long-lasting Insecticide Nets (LLINs). They recently used a ComDev approach to help spread the message about LLINs to communities in Ghana. The approach included community-based theatre, in which local people performed a drama highlighting the need for mosquito nets. This ComDev initiative fit within the broader goals and timeline of the RBM project, but required its own planning and implementation as a separate component from the wider goals. This reinforced the use of ComDev, particularly participatory theatre, as an isolated activity rather than ComDev acting as a platform that supports the larger development initiative, in this case, reducing global malaria deaths.

In Figure 1, this community-based theatre initiative can be seen as occupying the grey circle in the implementation phase within the larger plane of RBM activities. ComDev projects such as these are often promoted or seen as separate from the rest of the broader project aims and so appear as isolated activities with their own project cycle. While these could involve ComDev components, such as participatory planning or the use of media, these ComDev projects are limited to the greater activities sphere because, for example, the need for mosquito nets has already been decided externally, and community involvement is minimal except in implementation. Indeed, even the nature and degree of community involvement is often determined externally.

This approach limits collective action among agencies and partners, and undermines organizational ability to capture the potential contribution of ComDev in sustainable poverty alleviation, including building food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods. Despite being repeatedly addressed at interagency discussions, the mainstreaming of ComDev intermittently loses visibility and often is dismissed or forgotten among organizational restructuring or financial uncertainty (Balit, 2012; UNDP and The World Bank, 2009).

In contrast to this approach, Figure 2 shows ComDev as the supporting foundation of a livelihood-based development initiative – this is the approach advocated in this paper. Figure 2 reflects a mainstreamed approach to ComDev in which its role has been amplified to support all of the elements of the project cycle, including the facilitation of transdisciplinary collaboration across partner agencies.

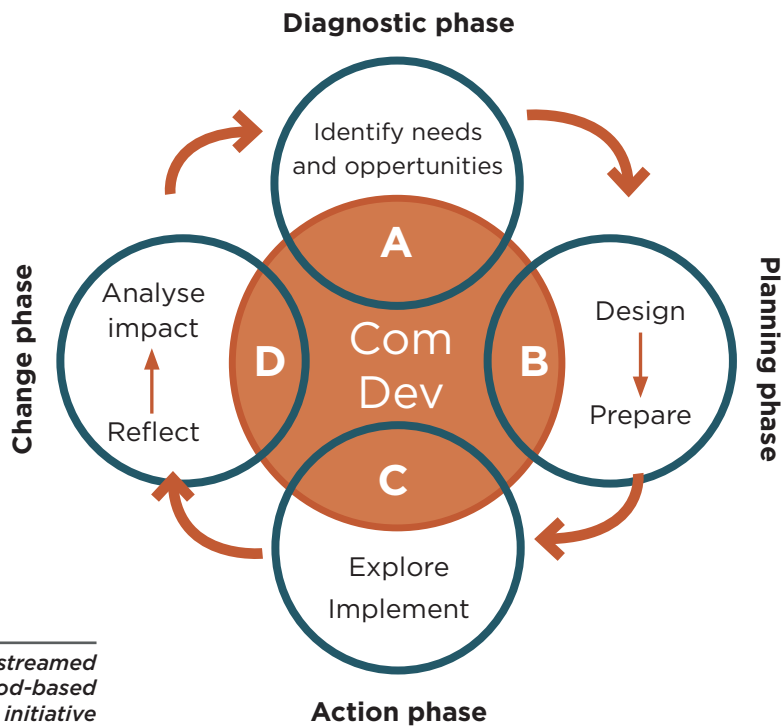


Figure 2: ComDev mainstreamed and supporting a livelihood-based development initiative (after Thomas and Van de Fliert, 2014, p.124)

In the above figure, the role of ComDev can be understood as more than just an activity in itself, but as an approach based on principles of dialogue, advocacy, participation and purpose that provides the platform for all communication functions within all stages of the development cycle, whether diagnostic, planning, implementation or change. Table 1 identifies the six aforementioned functions put forth by Quarry and Ramirez, and locates them within the spaces shared by ComDev and the four phases of a development initiative.

ComDev Functions	Diagnostic	Planning	Implementation	Change
Policy communication	✓		✓	✓
Educational communication	✓		✓	✓
Participatory communication	✓	✓	✓	✓
Advocacy communication	✓			✓
Organizational communication	✓	✓	✓	
Public relations		✓	✓	✓

Not meant to be an exhaustive list of the roles of ComDev, these communication functions –and their placement within the spheres of the project cycle – serve as a foundation for directing development planners and practitioners towards an understanding of the principles underlying ComDev.



Additionally, ComDev activities or approaches may differ between different stages. Reflecting on the six trends identified in section 3.2.1, participatory video or photography may prove particularly useful during the diagnostic stage, whereas community radio or ICTs may be more appropriate during implementation. Indeed, ComDev experts have consistently identified numerous opportunities for incorporating ComDev approaches across the project cycle (see, for example, Agunga, 2012, p. 519).

To be sure, adopting the mainstreamed model of ComDev carries certain implications for development agencies. As mentioned earlier in this paper, lessons can be learned from the approaches used to successfully mainstream gender within organizations. It is the recommendation of the authors that in-house ComDev experts, working as individuals or in teams, support and work within each component of the cycle. This will ensure not only the smooth adoption of ComDev principles and approaches at every step along the project cycle but also the achievement of the overall aim of attributing a greater value to voice across the development landscape. If successful, the mainstreaming of ComDev will be emblematic of the paradigm shift within development called for by UN agencies and seasoned practitioners alike.

For many institutions and practitioners, the challenge in mainstreaming ComDev involves not only understanding the tools themselves but also recognising how these tools can be utilized to encourage local participation in the change process. ComDev will only be mainstreamed when the use of these approaches no longer requires justification, and when the principles of dialogue, advocacy, participation and purpose are incorporated into every stage of the development process.



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CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has argued that through harnessing the potential of ComDev and working in collaborative partnerships with a range of stakeholders and organizations, the UN will be able to better mainstream ComDev across its policies and programmes. Throughout the paper, we have identified several specific recommendations for how UN agencies can effectively mainstream ComDev, particularly when supporting food-secure and resilient rural livelihoods. Some of these recommendations have been raised at previous UNRTs and elsewhere, however there is little evidence that these have been followed through or implemented, and hence require further discussion at the XIII UNRT.

Recommendations for UN agencies and other institutions are as follows:

- 1)** Design and implement a policy framework for ComDev within organizations and programmes. This framework should recognize ComDev as the platform facilitating interagency partnerships for transdisciplinary, livelihood-based development as well as the mechanism for amplifying voice, providing access and enabling exchange.
- 2)** Instil a basic level of awareness about ComDev principles and functions among staff and development partners.
- 3)** Involve at least one ComDev specialist in each programme or initiative who can lead or advise on ComDev processes.
- 4)** Develop and systematically adopt consistent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms as part of ComDev strategies across the UN, ensuring strong links with policy.
- 5)** Develop and implement an advocacy strategy to systematically promote the principles of ComDev across the UN and other development organizations.

Global efforts that apply livelihood-based approaches to development, rather than problem- or sector-based, are needed to address the current global threats described previously. Consequently, strong interagency partnerships are essential, allowing each agency to contribute specific expertise or target a certain section of community but collectively reinforcing each other's work in achieving overall development outcomes. ComDev processes can facilitate this kind of collaborative planning, implementation and evaluation of programs. They can also articulate stakeholders' needs and options in a holistic and integrated manner, mobilize assets and resources to be used efficiently, and support other educational, participatory and advocacy communication functions in program implementation.

A clear opportunity for these kinds of partnerships exists in the collective need to address resilience in rural development, particularly in family farming contexts, as this is where food security, nutrition, health and education come together. Such an approach to development would require the collaborative action of organizations like FAO, UNICEF and WHO, each of which can contribute their own technical expertise but together share a vision of ComDev as a platform for facilitating development, along with local governments and community organisations. It is time for the operationalization of such approaches within partnerships to be explored, tested and institutionalized.





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APPENDIX: REGIONAL CASE STUDIES

A: AFRICA

1. Communication for development in Africa
 - 1.1 Emergence and evolution of ComDev
 - 1.2 Main ComDev players in the region
2. Institutionalizing ComDev in the region
3. ComDev success stories in the region
 - 3.1 Case 1: Securing land access in Burkina Faso
 - 3.2 Case 2: ComDev - the backbone of the fight against polio
 - 3.3 Case 3: One Village One Product, Gambia
4. Recommendations to effectively mainstream ComDev

B: ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

1. Communication for development in Asia and the Pacific region
 - 1.1 Emergence and evolution of ComDev
 - 1.2 Main ComDev players in the region
2. Institutionalizing ComDev in the region
3. ComDev success stories in the region
 - 3.1 Case 1: Advocacy for indigenous peoples' rights by PANLIPI
 - 3.2 Case 2: Rural Communication Services through Community Rural Radio (RCS-CRR) for agricultural development in Bangladesh
 - 3.3 Case 3: Vong Tay Lon in Vietnam: Participatory learning and networking programme
4. Recommendations to effectively mainstream ComDev

C: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION

1. Communication for development in Latin America and the Caribbean region
 - 1.1 Introduction
 - 1.2. Emergence and evolution of ComDev
 - 1.3. Main ComDev players in the region
2. Institutionalizing ComDev in the region
3. ComDev success stories in the region:
 - 3.1 Case 1: The Communication for Sustainable Development Initiative (CSDI) in Bolivia
 - 3.2 Case 2: MOCASE-VC community radio in Argentina
 - 3.3 Case 3: Mobile phones in Trinidad and Tobago
4. Recommendations to effectively mainstream ComDev



APPENDIX A AFRICA

1 COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

1.1 EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF COMDEV

In Africa, ComDev is one of the tools used for resolving critical survival issues faced by communities. These issues include food insecurity, barriers to the commercialization of agricultural products, soil degradation, threats to land, scarcity of water and related conflicts, scarcity of fuel, wood and energy, and negative impacts of climate change. ComDev made an important breakthrough in West Africa in the 1990s through projects in the forestry sector, funded by The Netherlands and implemented by FAO. The adoption of a participatory approach, supported by ComDev, was a major change in how development in this sector was approached.

In Senegal, the main communication tool became a rural radio programme, which was jointly implemented by foresters and National Radio agents in ten regions. FAO documented the experience in a video, currently available in French, English and Spanish. The achievements made by the forestry sector of Senegal have been, and continue to be, consolidated and expanded by projects in various sectors, with support from various donors. The *Projet d'Appui à la Petite Irrigation Locale*, with support from the African Development Bank; The Agriculture and Natural Resources Management Program *Wula Nafaa*, together with USAID; The *Programme National de Développement Local*, with support from the World Bank and African Development Bank, are some examples.

In Mali and Guinea Bissau, since 1994, the mainstreaming of ComDev has gone beyond just one sector to reach the status of a National Policy for Communication for Development. It was piloted by the Ministry of Communication and became the reference framework for all development programmes. In 2005, the Bumbuna Dam in Sierra

Leone, the West Africa gas pipeline and urban water reform in Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya were among projects supported by the World Bank DevComm Division. UNICEF also plays a critical role in the expansion of ComDev in Africa, because it is a strategic objective of the organization.

The rapid development of ICTs and mobile phones, particularly during the last ten years, has created exciting new opportunities for ComDev, making it possible to fruitfully combine modern and traditional communication tools. In this context, the multimedia community centres promoted by UNESCO in Mali, Mozambique and Senegal, with support from the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA), were at the forefront.

More recently, Food Security through Commercialization of Agriculture/Programme Italien pour la Sécurité Alimentaire (FSCA/PISA), funded by the Government of Italy and implemented by FAO in seven African countries (Senegal, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Sierra Leone, Liberia and The Gambia) included ComDev in their operations. FSCA/PISA ensured the training of communication specialists from the seven countries in ComDev and strengthened the capacities of the communities in participatory video. Another case is the African Farm Radio Initiative (AFRRI), jointly implemented by Farm Radio International and the World University Service of Canada (WUSC), with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in five countries (Tanzania, Uganda, Mali, Ghana and Malawi).

The institutionalization of ComDev is, however, far from being achieved and substantial efforts still need to be made. With the exception of UNICEF, the ad-hoc positioning of ComDev units in large international development organizations reflects a weak interest in ComDev. Hence, staff and budget allocations for this discipline are below the minimum prerequisite for efficient and meaningful support to field programmes. Training in ComDev is carried out on an ad-hoc basis when external resources allow, and regional training centres that used to offer courses, such as the Southern Africa Development Community Regional Centre of Communication for Development, which was replaced by the non-profit African Centre of Communication for Development (ACCD), and the Centre Interafricain d'Etudes en Radio Rurale de Ouagadougou (CIERRO), have stopped offering training. ComDev field activities are fundamental to country projects and programmes, since they are able to mobilize the important resources required to implement ComDev. Yet unfortunately at the end of the project or programme cycle, field activities tend to wane.

1.2 MAIN COMDEV PLAYERS IN THE REGION

The main ComDev players in the Africa region are listed in the table below:

Category	Role	Specific examples
Government institutions in charge of agriculture, land issues, forestry, environment, natural resources, health and local governance	Political leadership, decision-making and technical leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senegal: Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement • Durable • Nigeria: Ministry of Health • Burkina Faso: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Sécurité Alimentaire • Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire et de la Décentralisation
UN agencies	Technical assistance, capacity-building, regional experience sharing	FAO, UNICEF, UNESCO
International and regional banks	Funding and technical assistance	World Bank, African Development Bank
Bilateral cooperation agencies, foundations and NGOs	Funding and technical assistance	USAID, Wula Nafaa, Millennium Challenge Account, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, AFRRI, Oxfam, World Vision
Private sector (mobile services providers)	Partnership with projects for low-cost dissemination of information	Mobile service providers in Senegal, Gambia, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique (Orange, Vodafone)
Rural radio networks	Partnerships with projects for regular broadcasting of radio programmes	Senegal, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso and Uganda

2 INSTITUTIONALIZING COMDEV IN THE REGION

Examples of ComDev initiatives in Mali with initial support from FAO and consolidation from UNICEF, as well as Guinea Bissau, have demonstrated that the institutionalization of ComDev under the guidance of the Ministry of Communication is feasible. However, the key factor of the success was the personal involvement of high-level political decision-makers. Considering the frequent political changes in Africa, this asset can easily become a killing factor, leading to the rapid loss of important achievements. Today, it is not unusual to find different programmes using ComDev existing simultaneously but operating independently within the same institution.

The requirements of ComDev are known: training of technicians and community members, contribution to building or increasing self-confidence among beneficiaries, promoting a proactive attitude, understanding the social structure, power relations and diverging interests, particularly when it comes to the position of women and youth. ComDev also requires systematization of models for local organizations, creating an exchange of experiences among neighbouring communities and the sharing of best-practices. The legitimacy of representatives of the community must be thoroughly assessed and the relations between the community and the development agents must be based on confidence.

Finally, the relevant communication tools must be chosen to ensure the flow of information and common understanding of problems and possible solutions. The national budget of most African countries cannot bear the costs of the human and financial resources, infrastructure and means for mobility, which are obligatory to meet these requirements. Short-term projects create the ideal working environment, meeting all the requirements, but only for limited periods. One possible solution could be to gradually replace the ad-hoc intervention of projects with the inclusion of dedicated lines in national budgets, reinforced by budgetary support from donors.

3 COMDEV SUCCESS STORIES IN THE REGION

3.1 CASE 1: SECURING LAND ACCESS IN BURKINA FASO

The objective of the *Projet de Sécurisation Foncière* implemented in Burkina Faso with support from the US Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) was to improve land governance to facilitate economic growth and investments in rural land. This included important changes in the legal framework and new laws were passed in 2012. Special attention was given to the access of women to land. An important share of the resources was devoted to the communication strategy implemented by Jade Productions, led by a renowned African ComDev expert, Souleymane Ouattara.



To fill gaps in information, sensitisation and capacity-building of the basic aspects of land tenure laws, three categories of communication tools were used:

- Scripto-visual tools: thematic calendars, flyers, image box, participant work-books, training guides, vade mecum and extension brochures.
- Audio tools: infomercials, magazines and micro-programmes.
- Audio-visual tools: filmed theatre, film 'la Réforme Agraire et Foncière fait peau neuve'.

After a successful first phase of the project, in which the application of ComDev principles contributed significantly, MCA approved a second phase in Burkina Faso. The key factors of success were:

- Setting up a network of 'disseminateurs villageois' tasked with facilitating the organization of platforms to be showcased at the village level.
- Targeting strategic actors in the application of land tenure laws, for example, the President of the Conflict Resolution Commission.
- Establishing formal partnerships with technical services associated with the implementation and sustainability of communication activities.
- Leaving the leadership to village development committees.
- Involving local radios.
- Broadcasting a major radio programme in seven local languages that focused on experience-sharing among villages and groups in villages.
- Hiring communication specialists posted in the five sites of the project and ensuring the flow of information from and to the beneficiaries.

3.2 CASE 2: COMDEV - THE BACKBONE OF THE FIGHT AGAINST POLIO

Eradication of poliomyelitis is one of major goals of UNICEF and ongoing programmes are being implemented in several countries in West and Central Africa, including Nigeria. As in all UNICEF field programmes, vaccination programmes are deployed using the principles of ComDev.

In Kano State, northern Nigeria, where more than one-third of all children were under-immunised in 2013, a polio outbreak prompted a particularly strong communication campaign. Along with other high-risk states in the country, Kano embarked on a massive door-to-door polio immunisation campaign. Government, traditional and religious leaders, media, community health workers and a wide range of stakeholders,

collaborated to make the exercise a success (from UNICEF Polioinfo, <http://www.polio-info.org>). It was an occasion to combine traditional and modern communication tools for a fast response to an emergency situation.

As part of a ground-breaking public-private partnership to fight polio, Nigeria decided to harness the power of smartphones to monitor real-time performance of vaccination teams during door-to-door campaigns. Using GPS data, a specially designed android application mapped the location of communities in high-risk areas for polio, and enabled monitoring of the quality and coverage of campaigns in real-time.

3.3 CASE 3: ONE VILLAGE ONE PRODUCT, GAMBIA

In the Gambia, the Food Security through Commercialization of Agriculture (FSCA) project, with FAO as executing agency, adopted the 'One Village One Product' (OVOP) concept, a community-centred approach based on local knowledge that aims to improve the quality and marketing of final products. Each village in the programme produces one competitive and staple product as a business to increase sales revenue and improve living standards of the community. The approach sets out to achieve economic development by producing quality crops and adding value to local production through quality control, packaging and marketing processes.

Overall, the FSCA Gambia project benefited 12 000 people including small-scale farmers, women's groups, farmer facilitators and the most vulnerable members of the community. OVOP played an important role in promoting rural economic growth, improving the livelihoods of the local population and contributing to poverty reduction. As a result, more skills and jobs have been developed and created. ComDev has been a key component of the initiative to strengthen cohesion among beneficiaries and facilitate valuable knowledge sharing (from Yenkasa Platform, <http://comdev-africa.amarc.org/en/node/35>).

FAO ensured training in ComDev for the communication specialists of the seven participating countries covered by FSCA (Senegal, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Gambia and Mali), and conducted a participatory video initiative with communities in project sites. The issues that the OVOP concept and ComDev had to solve were:

- Bridging the gap in knowledge and skills concerning production practices and seed treatment.
- Lack of awareness on the concept and use of the OVOP.
- Lack of ability to solve community problems.
- Insufficient opportunities for sharing information and experiences concerning agricultural practices among project beneficiaries.



The key to success was to clearly identify the problems to be solved using the principles and tools of ComDev and bring support to the community by producing relevant communication products.

Key factors for success

From these three cases, together with other examples, it is possible to summarise the key factors of success of ComDev initiatives:

- The establishment of community radio for local information provision and exchange.
- In-service training and capacity-building of technicians.
- The opportunities for positioning and enhanced roles of women and youth.
- Improved relevance of the content of communication programmes, resulting in more convincing responses to solving problems faced by communities.
- The judicious combination of modern and traditional communication tools; the most striking example being the expansion of the power of rural radio via mobile phones, a real democratisation of access to air by community members.

Barriers to mainstreaming ComDev

A former Minister of Agriculture of Uganda stated, with humour, that while salt is an indispensable ingredient, when the meal is served it is invisible. Communication in development suffers the same fate. The contribution of ComDev to developing successful programmes is often difficult to quantify, therefore it is often difficult to define the required resources. It is not unusual to find cases where the elaboration of the communication strategy begins when the project activities have already started (for example, Integrated Production and Pest Management Regional EU/FAO programme).

Another interesting illustration of the lack of visibility of ComDev can be found in the final report of the FSCA Italy/FAO programme, 2012. While countries signalled the specific needs for pursuing communication activities, such as the use of mobile phones (Sierra Leone), access to internet (Senegal), and a communication product for each value chain (Guinea), a purpose-built ComDev strategy aimed at implementing and strengthening communication skills is not mentioned in the report.

In the case of the *Projet de Sécurisation Foncière*, specific constraints to communication are identified. Knowledge-related constraints included incomplete information on land settlements, gift, leasing, selling and borrowing. The planned solution is to devote

village-level facilitated meetings to the topic. Attitude and behaviour-related constraints include the fact that some communities deny land rights to migrants. The project facilitated the exchange of experiences and showcased the successful management of this sensitive issue. Tension among members of local administration (often members of opposition parties), leaders of Village Committees or traditional leaders, sometimes leads to unclear messages on land tenure to the community. The solution found by some mayors is to always discuss the land issues in public and make decisions only after a consensus.

Among the challenges and constraints to the mainstreaming and institutionalization of ComDev in the field are the numerous local languages, the short period for implementing projects, the lack of financial resources, and the unclear definition of role and responsibilities by gender. Also, despite significant improvements made possible by the remarkable diffusion of mobile phones and the increase in the number of community radios, the imbalance of information flow between urban and rural areas is still a reality.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EFFECTIVELY MAINSTREAM COMDEV

- 1) Research and promote evidence of the contribution of ComDev to the success of programmes and projects.
- 2) Increase the visibility and the resources (human and financial) allocated to ComDev in UN agencies and all institutions promoting ComDev.
- 3) At the national level, position ComDev among the standard activities of the Ministry of Communication and Technical Ministries, and create a specific ComDev budget line in each initiative while progressively abandoning the project approach.
- 4) In the meantime, favour iterative processes in planning and implementing programmes and secure the commitment of donors within flexible rules to accommodate the requirements of ComDev.
- 5) Disseminate more widely the existing training resources and promote national learning opportunities (cf. CTA mechanism «web 2.0 and social media learning opportunities »¹) and initiate partnerships with universities for inclusion and strengthening of ComDev in the curricula.
- 6) Use online training more frequently (cf. IMARK/FAO model).
- 7) Close the gap in the adoption of ICTs (use the CTA «web 2.0 and social media learning opportunities» and other ICT training possibilities).
- 8) Strengthen networking among all ComDev champions using Yenkasa (<http://yenkasa-africa.amarc.org/fr/node/86>).
- 9) Build on the passion of youth for social media in order to broaden their support for ComDev.

1 See, for instance, Participatory Communication Strategy Design by Paolo Mefalopulos and Chris Kamlongera.



APPENDIX B ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

1 COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

1.1 EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF COMDEV

The beginnings of ComDev in Asia can be traced back to a number of higher education institutions in India and the Philippines. In India, ComDev was initiated in the 1940s through the airing of rural radio broadcasts in Bhiwandi using indigenous language for the local communities¹. Organised experiments in ComDev were then undertaken in rural radio and development journalism in the context of rural development by academic centres. Notable among them were the University of Poona, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi University, Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society and University of Kerala.

In the Philippines, development communication, or devcom as it was called here, evolved from the earlier works of the Office of Extension and Publications of the then University of the Philippines College of Agriculture in 1954. It is here that the practice and study on how communication could be used to address the problems confronting agriculture and rural development started². Through the years, the office was elevated to an academic department, an institute, and eventually a full-fledged college under the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in 1998.

Introduced in a seminar as among the “breakthroughs” in agriculture by Dr Nora C. Quebral in 1971, and as a “carrier” of other breakthroughs, devcom was subsequently

1 Manyozo, Linje (2011). FSC Pioneer: Honouring Nora Quebral. MAZI Article published 3/9/2011, 2:03.

2 College of Development Communication (2011). Charting the Second Decade of the College of Development Communication: An Evaluation of CDC's Instruction, Research, and Extension Programs. UP Los Banos, College, Laguna, Philippines.

offered as a curricular programme at the undergraduate level in 1974. Its Masters programme started much earlier in 1972 and the PhD programme began in 1977. In a nutshell, the Los Baños brand of devcom can be described as reflexive, method-driven and theory-based, relying to a great extent on results of research as basis for planning communication interventions in rural development¹.

1.2 MAIN COMDEV PLAYERS IN THE REGION

Some of the major players and their roles in ComDev in the Asia and Pacific region are summarized in the following table:

Category	Role	Specific examples
Government ministries in agriculture, forestry, environment, natural resources, health	Development assistance-seeker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Philippines: Department of Agriculture ● Bangladesh: Ministry of Agriculture ● Vietnam: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Funding and donor agencies	Development assistance provider in terms of funding	World Bank, ADB, CIDA, GIZ
Technical assistance agencies	Programme formulation and implementation	FAO, World Vision, WHO
Country-based NGOs	On-the-ground assistance to project stakeholders	PANLIPI, Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication
Academe	Capacity-building	University of the Philippines Los Baños Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry
Private sector	ICT support	NETNAM (Vietnam)

¹ Manyozo, Linje (2011). Manifesto for Development Communication: Nora Quebral and the Los Baños School of Development Communication. Asian Journal of Communication. Vol. 16, No.1, March 2006, pp.79-99.



2 INSTITUTIONALIZING COMDEV IN THE REGION

ComDev institutionalization efforts and mechanisms include the following:

- Internal policy adopting ComDev as one of the organizational processes for accomplishing its goals.
- Formulating a ComDev plan and guidelines for its programmes.
- Training a critical mass of staff and partners on ComDev.
- Hiring a ComDev professional.
- Allotment of resources (budget and staff) for ComDev.
- Creation of a ComDev unit or office to manage all ComDev-related activities.
- Adaptation of ComDev to local culture.
- Documentation of ComDev contributions to development.

3 COMDEV SUCCESS STORIES IN THE REGION

3.1 CASE 1: ADVOCACY FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS BY PANLIPI (LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE FOR INDIGENOUS FILIPINOS)

PANLIPI is an organization of lawyers and advocates that pioneered and continues to engage in development work among indigenous peoples (IP) in the Philippines. Since it was formed in 1987, PANLIPI has been working with at least 40 (out of about 110) ethno-linguistic groups, representing a cross-section of IPs in the country in terms of geographic locations and cultures. Most of PANLIPI's projects centre on building IP communities' and IP organizations' capacities in claiming their legal rights to their ancestral domain, and in dealing with injustice and oppression. After the proclamation of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, their work has focused on the implementation of (a) socio-economic and cultural programmes for IPs that facilitate ancestral domains delineation and resource management planning, (b) developmental legal assistance programmes that provide an interface between the mainstream legal system and customary legal systems of IPs, and (c) capacity-building and political empowerment programmes that engender opportunities for IPs to participate in decision-making processes and help establish strong IP organizations. At the heart of their work is ComDev, which they call participatory development communication (PDC). ComDev principles, methods, tools and techniques are applied in their community organizing, advocacy,





lobbying, participatory development planning, capacity-building and learning, linkage and partnerships, and conflict resolutions.

Key factors for success

- Leadership that believes in the value of ComDev in their work. PANLIPI's Executive Director did not readily believe in the merits of ComDev. But years of working with ComDev professionals as partners in development projects convinced her of its value in PANLIPI's line of work.
- Professional training in ComDev. PANLIPI hired a lawyer with a professional background in ComDev and the executive director herself is currently taking up a Master's Degree in ComDev. A ComDev specialist was also appointed in its Board of Directors. Additionally, they helped secure a scholarship for one of the IP leaders to take up graduate study in ComDev. That IP now serves as a head teacher for an IP school being managed by a religious group.
- Formulation of integrated ComDev strategy. To systematically guide the operation of its various projects, PANLIPI held participatory communication planning among its staff, IP stakeholders and partners.
- Partnership with ComDev specialists from academe. PANLIPI has maintained strong partnership with the College of Development Communication, UP Los Baños for training, mentoring, advice and resource-sharing.

Barriers in mainstreaming ComDev

- Lack of funds for ComDev activities. This is so far the only barrier that has pulled back PANLIPI from completely mainstreaming ComDev in their work. Much of their dealings with IPs involve interpersonal or face-to-face interactions, which requires substantial resources for mobility.

3.2 CASE 2: RURAL COMMUNICATION SERVICES THROUGH COMMUNITY RURAL RADIO (RCS-CRR) FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH

RCS-CRR was a project implemented by FAO in 2010 with the Agriculture Information Services (AIS) of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in Bangladesh¹. It aims to improve access of people in the rural sector to agricultural information and enhance communication process for knowledge-sharing and lesson-learning between and among the different stakeholders in the agricultural production system. RCS refers to the provision of integrated, demand-driven, interactive, ICT-enabled communication processes to satisfy the knowledge and information needs of rural people. It integrates the use of community rural radio (CRR) and other community media and processes in its services.

1 FAO (2012). Terminal Report. Enhancing Rural Communication Services through Community Rural Radio for Agricultural Development in Bangladesh.



Key factors for success

- Availability of funds. The allocated funds aptly augmented the government's limited funds for radio station, equipment and antenna, and enabled the complete facility based on recommendations to be put in place.
- Capacity-building, training and on-the-job mentoring. AIS staff were sent on a study tour abroad for exposure to CRR operation and management. Radio broadcasters and technicians have participated in a series of trainings and workshops to enable them to develop and broadcast programmes based on the information needs of the local people.
- Support of AIS leadership. The director of AIS strongly supported the project's goals and activities and paved the way for the project staff to explain the issue of sustainability and institutionalization of RCS-CRR to the top MoA officials.
- Creation of RCS unit. To take care of the ComDev function in the AIS and the operation of CRR, a small Rural Communication Unit has been established with two staff at the national level and five radio staff at the local level.

Barriers in mainstreaming ComDev

- Inadequate funds to operate RCS-CRR. The process of integrating RCS-CRR as a regular service of AIS-MoA would imply the appropriation of regular government procedures, which are tedious in terms of fund generation and management. Generating external funds, on the other hand, also faces constraint in terms of government accounting procedures.
- Recall and deployment of trained staff. The staff assigned to the project who have been trained on various aspects of RCS-CRR have been recalled back to the Department of Extension (DAE). As per government policy, they can only be deployed for one year to the RCS-CRR project. The project is being run on very lean manpower comprising the regular AIS staff.
- Political dynamics at the local level. While officials and staff of government agencies at the local (upazila) level have been very keen and supportive of RCS-CRR, the elected official (upazila nirvana officer) was quite critical of the project. The project staff sensed he felt threatened by the potential for local radio to be used by the local people as a platform to air their complaints against his governance.

3.3 CASE 3: VONG TAY LON IN VIETNAM: PARTICIPATORY LEARNING AND NETWORKING PROGRAMME

Vong Tay Lon is a participatory development communication (PDC) learning and networking programme in the Vietnamese language. It makes use of an e-forum supplemented by periodic face-to-face discussion, field visits and printed materials. It was

implemented jointly in 2005 by five Vietnamese universities, a private corporation in ICT and an agency under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Vietnam¹.

PDC is a research and development initiative, which seeks to increase the capacity of researchers, development practitioners and stakeholders who are actively engaged in environment and natural resources management (NRM) to use PDC to work more effectively with local communities and policymakers. In the NRM context, PDC makes use of communication to build capabilities within local communities: (a) to discuss natural resources management practices and problems; (b) to identify, analyse and prioritize NRM problems and needs; (c) to identify and implement activities to respond to specific problems; (d) to identify and acquire the knowledge required to implement NRM initiatives; and (e) to monitor and evaluate efforts in PDC.

Key factors for success

- Translation and adaptation of PDC learning materials into Vietnamese language. This was deliberately done because PDC involves an exchange of experiences and knowledge among researchers and between researchers and local communities.
- Training of local facilitators. A pool of Vietnamese facilitators from five universities were trained on facilitation methods and techniques. This enabled them to apply PDC appropriately in various facets of the learning programme with minimal assistance from external resource persons.
- Planning of programme activities. A complete plan for one learning cycle of about six months was clearly laid down. This served as a common guide for both learning participants and facilitators in managing their time and other resources, and contained a strong commitment to the programme.
- Information technology support. Being an e-forum, the programme could have not taken off and be sustained in succeeding years without the support of a private ICT service provider, which charged only minimal maintenance fees.
- Professional training in ComDev. One faculty researcher from Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry was sent to pursue a Masters in Development Communication in UP Los Baños. They have since completed the degree and now lead Hue University's ComDev-related programs.

1 Suva, Madeline M. and Ma. Stella C. Tirol (2005). Mid-term Evaluation Report of Vong Tay Lon Programme in Vietnam. College of Development Communication, UP Los Baños and CIDA: Laguna, Philippines.



Barriers in mainstreaming ComDev

- Lack of critical mass of ComDev practitioners and professionals. To champion the mainstreaming and practice of ComDev, an adequate number of practitioners should be well placed in an organization to influence its policies, programs and practice. Despite the training of a number of faculty researchers in Vietnam, more are needed to enhance the importance of ComDev while also making it indispensable in government development programs. Moreover, an effort to introduce ComDev in undergraduate and graduate courses was hardly supported due to a lack of faculties with ComDev specialization.
- Poor documentation of lessons learned in ComDev programs. Despite good stories being shared by Vietnamese participants on how ComDev interventions have significantly transformed their work and lives, these were not appropriately captured in written, audio or video formats that can be easily distributed and retrieved by other development workers in the country. While internet is available, content relevant to the local needs is lacking.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EFFECTIVELY MAINSTREAM COMDEV

Mainstreaming ComDev relies on the following: availability of funds, capacity-building for a critical mass (both formal and non-formal), support of leadership, a strategic plan on how ComDev will be carried out, creation of a ComDev unit or office, partnership with and mentoring by ComDev specialists, and documentation of country experiences on ComDev contributions to development. UN agencies, therefore, should include in their projects adequate funds for capacity-building, including scholarship for formal and professional training in ComDev in universities offering ComDev degrees. Projects should focus strongly on educating the top leaders on the value of ComDev intervention and on the necessary commitment needed to ensure that ComDev is institutionalized in their system, according to their government's protocol. This commitment can be made part of their counterpart responsibility to ensure they will attend to the matter early during the project period.

Mainstreaming would also be facilitated by the development of a strategic plan that would guide an agency and the different actors on how ComDev could be developed and eventually incorporated into the regular structure and function of that agency. The deliberate creation of a unit or office to manage and carry out the ComDev function would ensure mainstreaming ComDev is supported.

Capacity-building in ComDev is not a one-time activity. Learning the craft and the skills requires continuous interface with experts and specialists whose years of experience can help provide valuable knowledge on what works and what does not. Partnership with such people from the academe or NGOs offering ComDev programs and services can help push or sustain mainstreaming efforts.



APPENDIX C LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION

1 COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

1.1 EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF COMDEV

Across Latin America and the Caribbean region, the practice of communication for development actually preceded the theory of ComDev. It particularly surged between the late 1940s and early 1950s as the result of three key initiatives: community radio in the village of Sutatenza, Columbia; where the primary goal was to provide agricultural education to farmers; miners' radio in Bolivia, which protested against the exploitation and oppression of indigenous workers in the mineral extraction industry; and Agricultural Extension and Health and Audio-visual Education, a programme sponsored and implemented by the United States of America.

These initiatives were soon replicated across the region. Rural community radio stations were particularly popular, with the establishment of the Escuelas Radiofonicas de Bolivia (ERBOL) in the 1960s, which trained local members of the community as citizen journalists. Agricultural extension services provided non-formal education and training to farmers who were largely illiterate, but the approaches lacked a scientific and theoretical foundation and primarily applied a top-down mode of delivery. Over the next decade, however, approaches involving grassroots innovation, experimentation and interactive learning became popular, with the focus no longer merely on technology but recognising and responding to the risks and vulnerabilities that affect rural smallholder families, their food security, access to markets and changes to productive systems, among other concerns.

While ComDev initiatives were initially focused on agriculture and rural development, it became increasingly common for ComDev processes to be incorporated in social, economic and technological development. It is fair to say that the Latin American creativity

combined with the general interest to promote development, resulted in a range of innovative uses of communication in development. A wide variety of experiences that range from rural radio to the effective use of ICTs for development have consistently contributed to new productive opportunities, rural employment and better economic conditions, while improving rural development processes.

1.2 MAIN COMDEV PLAYERS IN THE REGION

The major players in ComDev in the Latin America and Caribbean region are summarized in the following table:

Institution/organization	Description
The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO): Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean	FAO has a long history and extensive experience in the use of communication for rural and agricultural development. The RLC office strongly promotes and develops ComDev within their projects as well as in government institutions and civil society. The office works together and in close coordination with the OPC division in Rome.
World Association of Community Radio (AMARC)	AMARC (Latin America and the Caribbean ALC) is the organizational reference for an international, political and communicational movement created around community, civil society and popular radios all over the world.
Latin American Association of Radio Education (ALER)	ALER was created in 1972. The first 18 stations have contributed to overcoming illiteracy, especially in the countryside. ALER seeks to improve the planning and evaluation of radio educational programs, train radio station staff and mobilize international financial support.

Institution/organization	Description
ComDev centres at national Ministries of Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costa Rica: El “Centro Nacional de Capacitación y Comunicación para el Desarrollo” CENCCOD has more than 20 years of history; it was created under the umbrella of a FAO project. • The Dominican Republic: CIDER (Departamento de Comunicación, Capacitación e Información para el Desarrollo Rural) continues working with the ComDev approach after 15 years. It is a Department of the Ministry of Agriculture. • Bolivia: CARENAS Foundation has been servicing development projects in communication for development for more than 15 years. It was created as a result of a FAO project. • Dominica: The Rural Communication Centre (RCC) was established at the beginning of the 1990s and also services the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States in ComDev. Nowadays it works as the Government Information System (GIS). • Paraguay: The Directorate of Agricultural Extension (DEAg), belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock has an Office of Communication for Development that has produced material to support the national extension system since 2000.
The Centre of Communication Voces Nuestras (Our Voices)	<p>Voces Nuestras has more than 20 years of experience. It is dedicated to accompanying and strengthening the expression of various social groups, especially their informative, participating, articulating and public impact capacities.</p>
The Service of Training in Radio and Television Development, The Bolivian Catholic University	<p>SECRAD is a programme for the right to communication and information for people with disabilities, operating since 2002. It promotes the approach of communication for development from the perspective of communication rights.</p>



Institution/organization	Description
Onda Rural (Rural wave) Latin America	A regional communication initiative for rural development through the exchange of knowledge and sharing of experiences, technical advice and implementation of projects, and the establishment of partnerships and cooperation mechanisms in Latin America and globally.
PLATICAR Costa Rica	A web portal developed by the National Institute for Innovation and Transfer of Agricultural Technology (INTA in Spanish) in partnership with FAO. PLATICAR is the knowledge ecosystem for technology transfer of INTA.
AGRONET Colombia	The Strategic Network of Information and Communication for the Agricultural Sector, which was conceived by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Colombia with the FAO collaboration.
Plataforma de Comunicación para el Desarrollo en Centroamérica y México	The Platform is a learning and collaborative action community between people, organizations and institutions of Central America and Mexico, whose work is directly linked to ComDev.
The Communication Initiative (CI), Latin America	The mission of CI is to convene the ComDev community and the social and behavioural change community for more effective local, national and international development action.
Communication for Development degree, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú	The only university degree in ComDev in Latin America, preparing the students for research, design and implementation of ComDev projects and programmes.

2 INSTITUTIONALIZING COMDEV IN THE REGION

Institutional strengthening of ComDev has been an important area of interest and commitment in the region. Yet despite efforts by government institutions related to rural and agricultural development, ComDev has not been fully incorporated into state structures. Policy-makers and implementers of government policies for rural areas are often under pressure to obtain immediate results in order to disseminate information quickly and effectively. Corporate communication, public relations and corporate image creation instead become the primary focus of institutions and civil organizations.



In Mexico, ComDev has been recognized worldwide for its contribution to the success of major public investment projects, even though corporate communication still seems to be predominant. As the case study of Martinez and Murillo clearly explains, “the institutions failed to recognize the role of communication and the direct contact to farmers groups as fundamental”.

The institutionalization of ComDev took its first roots within NGOs and national and international agencies’ projects, as well as in university programs. The Faculty of Sciences and Communication Arts of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru consider Communication for Development one of its main university courses.

3 COMDEV SUCCESS STORIES IN THE REGION

3.1 CASE 1: THE COMMUNICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (CSDI) IN BOLIVIA

Bolivia is located in South America, with a population of about 10.5 million people. The rural sector is set as the third component of the GDP, with an average share of 15 percent in recent decades. The National Development Plan (NDP) was launched by the government to implement policies and strategies, while also placing the state as promoter and protagonist of development.

The Bolivian System of Innovation is the backbone of technical institutes with mandates to serve the development of rural and urban areas. The project framework was the National System of Agriculture and Forestry Innovation (SNIAF, Spanish denomination). The SNIAF promotes, manages and coordinates agricultural and forest communities, linking innovation and responding to the different stages of production complexities, such as technical assistance, extension and training, research and genetic resources and seed supply.

Description

ComDev has a rich history in Bolivian public institutions supporting rural areas, small-scale farmers and indigenous organizations, and implementing technical solutions in agriculture and forestry, natural resource management, climate change, family farming and food security. The Communication for Sustainable Development Initiative (CSDI) of FAO together with the Bolivian Ministry of Rural Development and Land (MDRyT) carried out a ComDev project, field operated by the National Institute of Agricultural and Forestry Innovation (INIAF) and financed the Italian Ministry for the Environment and Territory financed the project activities. The purpose of the project was to develop, test and implement local proposals, strategies and communication services under the MDRyT sectorial policy, and to further strengthen the ComDev capacity of the National



Institute of Agricultural and Forestry Innovation (INIAF).

Key factors for success

The CSDI in Bolivia was a collective action aimed at consolidating a communication, knowledge and information management system that would provide services to the Bolivian stakeholders of the agro-rural development at all levels. Institutional strengthening was also an area of interest and commitment for the project, mainly in building individual and collective capabilities, generating social capital and promoting the effects and results obtained by rural development actions. The project also produced a number of tangible materials, such as communication and knowledge information modules, documents on concepts, strategies and plans for local implementation and training resources, and specific methodologies to articulate stakeholder engagement at local level. Technical agricultural innovations were adapted and adopted by individual farmers, groups and organizations. During the project lifetime, national and local innovation and communication strategies related to agriculture and rural development were prepared and carried out.

Barriers in mainstreaming ComDev

INIAF is a large and relatively new institution devoted to agriculture and forestry. Its organizational structure and scarce budget had little space for disciplines outside of agronomy and its related fields. The communication team also had to cover institutional aspects rather than focus on ComDev, which was managed by the project at field-level only. Another barrier was the shortage of personnel, both the communication officials and technical development officers.

3.2 CASE 2: MOCASE-VC COMMUNITY RADIO IN ARGENTINA, RURAL RADIO NETWORK AND ITS POLITICAL AND CULTURAL PROJECT

Santiago del Estero is a province in Argentina's northern region with 874 006 inhabitants. The rural population is close to 40 percent and there are a number of indigenous groups living in the province (for instance, Zurita, Guaycurú, Sanavirón and Diaguita). It is the second province with the lowest human development and the third lowest Gross National Product (GDP) per capita in the country. Lack of land access (and insecurity of tenure), the nonexistence of support for small-scale farmers and the absence of adequate public services are some of the main causes of the poor living conditions of rural communities.

Description

One of the most important, and well known, peasant movements of Santiago del Estero is Via Campesina (MOCASE-VC) established in August 1990. The focus of la Via Campesina is to interact with other similar organizations, including those without voice,



such as workers, students, academics and the unemployed, in order to raise their voices globally. Since 2003, five community radio stations were created and placed in strategic locations in the province. They were installed in locations according to the communication needs between the landowners and the community.

Key factors for success

MOCASE-VC radio network has played an important role in sharing important information about farming, gender rights and community issues. The radio's main aim was to broadcast everyday village life, produce radio material (music) and highlight radio as an important tool for use where there is no phone signal. As expressed by one of the peasant leaders, "Peasant radios are the air of the mountain that spreads awareness, knowledge, example of struggle and organization for a world of justice and equality" (pers. comm. Deolinda Carrizo, member of the "Movimiento Campesino de Santiago del Estero-Vía Campesina - Mo.Ca.SE-VC").

This breakthrough in "santiagueños"¹ life had consequences though, some of which were documented via informal surveys that explored the legitimacy and sympathy to MOCASE-VC. It was concluded that the radio movement played a leading role in the overall development efforts: "Information comes clear and direct, who we are, what we do, what goals we have, how we see the local political situation, provincial and national" (pers. comm. Angel, smallholder farmer and member of the Mo.Ca.SE-VC movement). Through radio stations people have also finally denounced the illegal land clearing.

Barriers in mainstreaming ComDev

Currently there is no balance between the existence of commercial broadcast media and community media or public media. The vast majority of towns and cities do not have radios and TV channels run by the local community or state. There are also not enough funds to cover the radio station management expenses.

3.3 CASE 3: MOBILE PHONES IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, IMPERATIVES, MOBILE OPPORTUNITIES AND CRITICAL FACTORS FOR INCLUSION IN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES (MFISHERIES)

Trinidad and Tobago is a twin-island republic located further south in the Caribbean archipelago with a combined area of 5 128 square kilometres. The country has a population of 1.3 million English-speaking people who are descended primarily from eastern India (40 percent) and Africa (37.5 percent). Small-scale fishermen are near the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid, as well as with regards to their respective business performance and attention to environmental ecosystems – although artisanal fishers catch an estimated 80 percent (FAO, 2000) of the annual national marine produce. Training on aspects related to the fishing value chain, as well as information and communication, is relatively scant in Trinidad and Tobago.

1 People born in Santiago de Estero.



Description

The mFisheries project was developed in partnership with the Caribbean ICT Research Programme at the University of the West Indies (UWI) in Trinidad and Tobago (CIRPTT). Funding support was received from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Network Information Centre Trinidad and Tobago (TTNIC) and BG Trinidad and Tobago to cover various aspects of research and fieldwork.

CIRPTT aimed to: (a) promote multi-stakeholder knowledge exchange and discussion on the potential contribution of ICTs for economic development and poverty alleviation, (b) develop capacity to pursue related opportunities for innovative mobile-enabled services, and (c) provide related empirical data and analysis to inform Caribbean policy and regulation. The establishment of a network of boundary partners within the fisheries sector was critical to the implementation and sustainability of the mFisheries project.

Mobile Fisheries, 'mFisheries', presents a channel for the integration of technology-excluded small scale fisher folk into the global information society through the use of mobile applications, services and content. The mFisheries project devised a suite of mobile applications that were implemented among small-scale fisher folk who had mixed educational backgrounds, but were already comfortable utilizing the mobile phones; more than 93 percent of fishermen used mobile phones. The mFisheries mobile application suite was produced provide solutions to fishers' challenges and needs. An example is Got Fish Need Fish (GFNF), which is an interactive application that facilitates the broadcast of notifications from individuals who have fish for sale (Got Fish) and those who wish to purchase fish (Need Fish). It displays matches between those who have and those who need the same type of fish and facilitates a phone call or message between parties interested in pursuing a sale.

The mFisheries application components facilitated new forms of communication between fisher folk and other actors in the value chain of artisanal fisheries, such as the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, legislators, the media, the public and the CIRPTT team. Strategic materials were produced in the form of a resource pack for development-focused mobile innovation. The introduction to the digitally poor fisher-folk community of a smart device with a unique application suite also required the implementation of a training strategy.

Key factors for success

The validation of the mFisheries application is shown through changes in behaviour, attitude and ability of fisher folk to engage in the project, gain and share new knowledge and create awareness among legislators, as well as in the formation of important new relationships. These changes are a sign of ownership of the tools provided by the project and its inclusion in daily life. The correct assessment of necessities and



requirements, and the solution implemented is a key factor of success; additionally reinforced by the interest shown in the mFisheries application suite of several jurisdictions and also the replication of components in the Cook Islands in the Pacific.

mFisheries is a technology-based intervention that directly benefits members of outlying artisanal fishing communities and holds the promise of improving fisheries management conditions by strengthening the performance of key stakeholders within the sector. Governments seek methodologies that are responsive to the pressing need for lean and nimble innovation as central components of institutional and national competitiveness. The suitability of the mobile technology was a key factor of success, even though fishermen only used certain components, rather than all components, to improve their business.

Barriers in mainstreaming ComDev

The Got Fish Need Fish component (the virtual market place) of the mFisheries tool system was highly appreciated but not effectively used by fisher folk. Despite this, the majority of them (84.4 percent) believed that the mFisheries tools do respond to operational issues and can therefore save substantial time and improve their work on fisheries. Ninety percent now feel confident that the smartphones – with a good selection of applications – could be used to enhance their fishing work.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EFFECTIVELY MAINSTREAM COMDEV

From the viewpoint of government institutions, ComDev is still a relatively weak area of development. Therefore it requires substantial effort to integrate this approach within the global organizational framework. Community experiences show that the ComDev approach is very efficient, and easily integrates within small-scale operations. Nevertheless, it is still not mainstreamed to the extent it should be because corporate communication is more commonly utilized, especially when governmental issues are being addressed. While agricultural matters could effectively be communicated via ComDev approaches and tools, today only a few ComDev specialists are able to promote and apply the above mentioned approaches within their own projects, and therefore only a few are able to raise and attract possible funding resources.

A lack of personnel in government institutions is a relatively important barrier to the development of ComDev projects and programmes, even if they are sharing responsibilities with other disciplines. The situation is not much different in civil society organizations (NGOs, unions, religious, farmer or indigenous associations) with respect to the possibilities of implementing lasting processes that show reasonable results.



From another perspective, an inventory should be made of what is happening in ComDev in many Latin American societies. As never before, possibilities have opened up to enable information and communication by citizens and community media groups. The fact that the right to communicate has been incorporated into country constitutions is a tremendous step towards increasing the opportunity for practices at the field level. But these are processes to be monitored and always critically analysed because, according to José Luis Aguirre, “otherwise successive governments could deny or revoke these citizen initiatives in order to maintain their control and exclusivity” (pers. comm. José Luis Aguirre, Director of ‘Servicio de Capacitación en Radio y Televisión para el Desarrollo’, SECRAD, Catholic University of Bolivia San Pablo).

Durable efforts, including durable financial resourcing, should be made by UN agencies to devise regional strategies at different governmental and civil society levels. Short-term projects in rural areas with strong traditional practices and great need, are providing the fish rather than teaching how to fish. The barriers are the same as those discussed in many meetings, seminars and round tables: ComDev is poorly understood as a main player in development within the agricultural sector, as is its approach and functionalities. Which of the UN agencies will become the champion in fostering ComDev? Are top-level decision-makers aware of and committed to ComDev?





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