Communications in Education

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Acronyms

C2005	Curriculum 2005
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DoE	Department of Education (South Africa)
EDUCAIDS	Global Initiative on Education and HIV & AIDS
EFA	Education for All
GAPs	Gender and Primary Schooling in Africa project
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
HEI	Higher Education Institute
IBE	International Bureau of Education (UNESCO)
ICD	Information and Communication for Development
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
ITESM	Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Study
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls Education Initiative
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Acknowledgements

1   Introduction

This report has been commissioned as part of the DFID-funded Information and Communications for Development (ICD) Knowledge Sharing and Learning Programme. This programme aims to: provide an overview of the evidence base related to the role of communications in development; provide access to studies and reports related to the impact of communication on development outcomes; and inform policy debates on the role of communications in development. Its central premise is:

> 'To impress upon senior-level decision makers ... the importance of prioritising communications for development principles and methodologies in all problematic areas, and the need to allocate human, technical and financial resources for this effort.'

Inter-agency Round Table report, 2007

This report has been commissioned not necessarily to support this premise, but rather to provide evidence of the role of communications in education, to identify where it has been successful and some of its weaknesses. The paper will focus on spaces for communications in education, the processes of communications and the direct and indirect impacts of communications initiatives. It gives examples of a range of communication initiatives and provides evidence of impact, where available.

There seems to be an increasing (usually donor-driven) demand to map the evidence of impact of communication initiatives as the role of communications is increasingly enhanced. At the same time education policy makers and practitioners are looking for information to fill gaps in knowledge bases and advice on how to attain national and international educational targets (e.g. Millennium Development Goals, the Education for All global movement). Thus for a range of educational stakeholders, communications is playing and can play an increasingly important role. This paper provides a source of information on the potentialities of communications throughout the education system.

The study is a desk-based review of documentation available about the spaces, processes and impacts of communications in the formal education sector. Documentation reviewed included academic articles; development reports; advocacy papers; newspaper articles; theses; and website content. A number of academics and educational professionals were also contacted and provided impetus and ideas for some of the directions of the study. The paper starts with background information about the workings of formal education systems and the role communications can play; it then provides information on the terminology and methodology used. There are five main sections of analysis: 1)

Communications with policy makers; 2) Global communications; 3) Policy to practice; 4) Communication in and around schools; and 5) Information communication technologies (ICTs) and education. The Conclusion brings some of the discussions together.

1.1   Communications in the formal[1] education sector

The paper does not have the space to look at the complexities of context-specific education sectors and the role communications might play in each one, rather it provides a brief outline of some of the principles of communication within 'typical' education systems and highlights some of the potential tensions involved.

Education systems tend to work on three inter-connected levels: a) the macro level – where national policies are developed and negotiated; b) the meso level – which oversees the implementation of national policy into practice, this is often located in the equivalent of provincial/local departments of education; c) the micro level: the schools and communities where policies are put into practice, and where educational stakeholders want to see change in practices in education. Effective communications in formal education systems therefore have to take place at a range of levels and include diverse groups of actors, depending on the messages and ideas being communicated. Civil society organisations often interact at all levels of educational systems, building support at the grassroots level and advocating for change at the governmental level.

In most education systems policy making takes place at the national level, and it is here that most education systems take their lead. The majority of knowledge outputs from research, development and advocacy programmes are directed to this level; and interactions with donors and the international education community mostly happen at this level. Communications in this respect are multi-layered and multi-directional. There is communication around the policy making processes themselves: why and how certain policies are pursued; how different stakeholders are involved in the process; the role of research and development advocacy in these processes.

In most countries there are also provincial/local educational authorities, whose responsibilities and communication roles vary according to country context. There has been a growing trend in recent years to decentralise some of the activities from central government to these provincial authorities. Decentralisation is seen as a pathway for improved delivery of social services and a mechanism to improve the democratisation of decision-making for increased system efficiency (see Dunne et al, 2007 for a recent review). However, criticisms of how this has worked in practice in some contexts question the degree to which power is actually transferred to provincial authorities (e.g. Kataoka, 2006, in Sri Lanka), and the extent to which education planning actually remains centralised (Dyer & Rose, 2005) and highlight possibilities of manipulation by elite groups (UNESCO, 2004; cited in Dunne et al, 2007). There are a range of potential communication roles and activities at the provincial level. In many countries provincial level educational authorities act as a conduit through which national policy traverses - they are expected to ensure implementation takes place at the school level and perform monitoring functions on school level performance. There is also a sense that communities and schools can work better with local educational authorities (rather than national), as lines of communication should be more immediate and aims more localised.

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[1] Given the length restrictions of this report, the focus will be on the formal educational sector, rather than non-formal provision, although there are some crossovers.

While conventionally much of the communications between the school/community level and national and provincial authorities has been top down (e.g. policy interventions communicated to and implemented at the school levels), increasingly the need for bottom up communications has been recognised. Moreover, as responsibilities in education management seemingly shift towards the school and community level, this requires capacity development for communications, as well as spaces and opportunities for communicating. The democratisation of educational structures seeks to enhance ownership of education at community levels, but also shifts some of the responsibility around policy implementation away from national and provincial authorities. Communication within schools and between communities and schools is also seen as key. A main function of schools is to provide learners with a range of skills, knowledge and competencies, which have their basis in some sort of interaction: e.g. teacher-student; student-student; student-learning resource. There has also been an increased focus on community-school interactions, and the potential benefits this type of communication might bring.

1.2   Importance of communications in education

A range of arguments can be put forward for the importance of integrating communications within education systems. Some of these are highlighted below and explored through the text. It can be claimed that good information and effective communications might help:

- enable communities and civil society to engage with educational issues at the school level, raise issues with educational providers and promote accountability of provision and promote public engagement with educational reform programmes

- increase public awareness of educational rights and make the uptake of educational services more likely, both for children and adults

- provide evidence to support decision-making processes

- improve the quality of policy formulation

- build shared understandings which may lead to social change

- improve educational service delivery and policy implementation

- involve the voices of the marginalised groups, to make educational provision relevant to their needs

- empower people to make decisions and develop ownership of educational processes

- improve the quality of learning and educational outcomes

Having said this, the role that communications might play could be influenced by education levels. For example, in situations where people have little or no literacy, certain approaches to communications could be seen as exclusionary (i.e. those which are written). Thus, by using certain forms of media, certain population groups are more likely to be marginalised from getting information and being involved in decision-making. These communicatory exclusions are less likely to be experienced by literates who have access to a range of information sources. Other forms of communication media (i.e. radio) are

viewed as more inclusionary, especially if efforts have been made to ensure broadcast material is designed to communicate effectively with a range of target audiences.

There is some general literature on communications which provides guidance on good practice (e.g. Hovland, 2005; Saywell & Cotton, 1999). These tend to be focused on a particular communications relationship e.g. the link between researchers and policy makers; civil society advocacy; communications for development projects; and participation in policy making. There has been less focus on looking at the range of communications relationships from a sector-wide perspective, and specifically the education sector. Even so, the general literature does offer a range of insights that will inform this paper. These include: 1) the need to create spaces for communications, to ensure a range of voices are heard and service provision is relevant to the full range of users; 2) communications needs to be embedded within institutional structures and systems, as well as project and programme designs; 3) research should be disseminated in a form that suits target audience needs; 4) access to information can increase user-engagement with issues; 5) communication capacity can be developed throughout the educational sector; and 6) communications initiatives take time and money.

1.3   Terminology

To provide clarity, some of the key terms used in the text will be briefly explored.

Communications – the term communications in this report is used in three interrelated ways: firstly, it refers to the interactions and engagements which take place between different actors in the education sector; secondly, it looks at the transmission of information, knowledge or data between two or more points (Saywell & Cotton, 1999); and thirdly, it refers to the processes and means though which these interactions take place. Communications in this respect is multi-faceted and multi-directional, it is both an event and a process, and can be the interaction, as well as the means of interaction.

Education sector – for the purposes of this paper, the focus is on the formal education sector (predominantly government-provided), rather than non-formal education provision (often provided by NGOs). The emphasis is also mainly on the primary, secondary and higher education sectors, rather than adult or teacher education.

ICTs (information and communication technologies) – is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, including: radio, TV, newspapers, Internet technology; computer technology and telephones. To differentiate the term 'new ICTs' is used here to talk specifically about computer / Internet technology in education.

Impact – adapting the DAC evaluation criteria (OECD, 2007) slightly (making reference to communications), impact refers to the, *"positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a (communication) intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended".* The impacts of communications initiatives are notoriously difficult to measure, and it is something that has engaged education and communication professionals alike. With a range of stakeholders involved, attribution to a particular source(s) is particularly difficult to gauge. Saywell and Cotton, discussing the impact of research dissemination, claim that, *"causal connections are difficult to trace, and are often speculative"* (Saywell & Cotton, 1999). Little research has been done in the education sector on this.

Policy makers – individuals, especially those in official bodies, who have the authority to make decisions about what problems will be addressed within a particular sector and how these problems will be handled.

Stakeholders – stakeholders include education policy makers and planners at different levels of the system, education professionals (such as teachers, curriculum and materials developers, head teachers), community members, parents, and children.

1.4   Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this report which will be highlighted in brief. Firstly, education is an immense field, with forms of communications present throughout. This report cannot attempt to account for the vast range of communication activities in their context-specific locations. Rather it attempts to provide a snapshot of these, and seeks to identify some of the impacts they have had. Secondly, while communication activities take place constantly in education, they are rarely documented and, where they are, the documentation is often based on self-reporting of the agencies involved in such activities. There is a dearth of material which looks specifically at communication practices (ICDs) in education, and in particular the impact of these (although this paper attempts to draw on the examples and case studies which do exist). Although, more information appears to be available in certain areas: health education, environmental education and ICTs in education, this is not necessarily indicative of the importance they command in the sector as a whole. Similarly, some countries have more available information on communication practices, and possibly more developed communication strategies (South Africa is a good example of this), whereas others offer less evidence of this. Thirdly, as this was a document-based review, it is restricted to those materials which were easily available via search engines and/or known to the author or contacts made during the report writing. The review has also been restricted by language, to materials available in English. Finally, this report is literature-based and is dependent on the methodological validity of the studies, documents and resources used.

2   Discussion and evidence

In this section four communication themes will be discussed in more detail, a brief review of literature will be given and examples provided. The first sub-section will look at communications with policy makers in education.

2.1   Communications with policy makers in education

Communication with policy makers is multi-faceted, multi-directional and takes place between different stakeholders at different times. This field is particularly important in the education sector because of the way education systems are set up. Most education systems are controlled centrally, with varying degrees of power held in provincial departments of education. National (and provincial, depending on the system) governments shape and direct the education system in a number of ways, for example formulating the curricula; setting assessment procedures; and establishing budgets. Policymakers therefore have substantial decision-making power and are key conduits for communications, both demand and supply-driven.

One important area of communications with policy makers relates to the knowledge arena. Stone[2] (2002) describes the complexities of communications in three ways: supply-side, demand-side, and policy currents, and outlines some of the weaknesses in communicating knowledge and information. In terms of the demand-side policy makers often want relevant, good quality information, but this can be in short supply, or communicated poorly (Stone, 2002). For policymakers to 'pull-in' this information, she describes how there might be both systemic and individual limitations. These might include a lack of knowledge of the types of information available; anti-intellectualism from some policy makers; the pressures on policy makers working to immediate time frames; and the selective use of information to reinforce policy preferences, prejudices and political choices. Supply-side information often comes from researchers, consultants or advocacy groups hoping to communicate with and influence policy makers. In terms of communicating to policy makers, advice for researchers includes: developing relationships with target audience members; understanding the policy environment; and providing relevant information, suitable to target audience needs, making it accessible and timely.

The report now looks at different forms of communication with policy makers: consultation processes; public participation; global campaigns and research policy linkages from the perspective of the education sector.

2.1.1 Information gathering: communications for consultation

Consultations are used by policymakers to generate and collect information from a range of stakeholders. Consultation is used to gather the ideas and opinions of a group through, for example, focus groups, workshop participation, online/email discussions, interviews and questionnaires. Research identifies some potential weaknesses in information gathering for consultations. Pretty (1995), in a typology of participation, describes how consultative processes do not concede any share in decision making, with external agents under no obligation to take on board people's views. There are also often questions about representivity, whose voices are heard, and who gets excluded from consultation processes, and often in education it is those who are most marginalised. The focus and boundaries for consultations are usually set by the group seeking information, meaning the respondents are controlled to some extent. Whilst consultations open up spaces for dialogue, the impact these voices have varies. In some cases consultation processes have been used to legitimise policy decisions already made or develop notions of ownership around policy. In others, it has been an open and independent process, with outcomes that have impacted on policy and policy makers.

Some examples of consultations in education are given below, including ones involving children and community members as stakeholders.

Children's participation in PRSP processes: Vietnam and Honduras

The following example is taken from work carried out by Save the Children in Honduras and Vietnam in particular (O'Malley, 2004). While the focus of the intervention was not on education directly, it appears to have had an important indirect impact on raising the profile of education within Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in these countries. PRSPs, which aim to provide approaches to promote growth and reduce poverty in countries, expect civil society to be consulted in their formulation, with the intention of presenting opportunities for civil society to influence government strategy and policy. The reality of consultation processes in PRSPs has varied, often with limited

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[2] While Stone has described research-policy gaps I have adapted these discussions to a wider knowledge-arena.

involvement of many education stakeholders in practice (see Caillods and Hallak, 2004, for more discussion on this). Adopting an innovative rights-based approach to child voice, Save the Children (O'Malley, 2004) created spaces to consult with children, gathering their views and experiences which Save the Children then used (as a civil society body) to advocate around these issues during the PRSP formulation. O'Malley (2004:17) described the consultation processes used with children, as *"challenges which require considerable resources – facilitating and resourcing children and young people's groups, producing accessible versions of key documents and finding ways that children and young people's input can be communicated to adults".* She also warns against the 'tokenistic' participation of children and the dangers of co-option.

In both countries, child respondents raised concerns around their access to education and identified weaknesses in the quality of education services provided. As a consequence to these inputs the profile of child poverty and education was raised in the PRSPs in both countries (O'Malley, 2004). In Vietnam, changes were made to procedures relating to unregistered migrants and the completed PRSP included many more references to children than it had in its planning stages. In Honduras government officials prioritised the issue of child poverty, including targets to reduce child labour and committed funds to fund education initiatives for child workers. It seems that, by including children[3] in PRSP processes in such contexts, there was a knock-on effect for children and education.

O'Malley (2004) raises a number of issues with respect to including children in these processes. There was concern about who was involved and whose voices were heard, with the inclusion of poor, marginalised groups seen as particularly important. There was a question around the amount of time and the financial implications of gathering this type of information. There were also issues around what happened to the views of children once they were collected, how they were communicated within the PRSP process and who made decisions about what was included or not. Added to this, it is important to see how the PRSP is subsequently linked to education policy structures. With these points in mind, this appears a good example of creating space for eliciting and communicating the context-specific views of children into policy processes, from which they are often excluded.

Multi-level participation in policy making processes: the Review of Curriculum 2005 in South Africa

The review of Curriculum 2005 (C2005) in South Africa is an example of how policy-making processes can be opened up to a whole range of actors, the communication processes this involved, and the impact this had. Curriculum 2005 was established in 1997 and a review called for after the Minister of Education Kader Asmal's 'listening campaign' of 1999. The process which is described below, started at the beginning of 2000, with the Revised National Curriculum Statement being produced in 2002 (DoE, 2002).

The experience from South Africa is particularly interesting with respect to the extent to which government encouraged a multiplicity of voices within the review process, the communication devices used and how these were acknowledged in the revised document. This focus on participation (and communications) in policy making comes in part from the constitutional focus on democracy, but also reflects a deep-seated belief that education can help transform South African society from the inequalities of the past. Communications were integral to the processes of policy reform. At each stage key stakeholders and

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[3] The inclusion of parents might have similar consequences.

members of the public were consulted and their views sought. The impact of the process was also impressive leading to an overhaul of curriculum structures.

Communications in the revision of Curriculum 2005 in South Africa

Listening campaign: When Kader Asmal took office as Minister of Education he undertook what he termed a 'listening campaign' to get ideas on how the transformation of education was progressing. He met with a range of stakeholders (including academics, bureaucrats, teachers union representatives, national governing body associations), read documents and received briefings. Several policy concerns were brought to his attention including frustrations with C2005 and the National Qualifications Framework - both of which underwent reform soon after.

Review Committee: Kader Asmal commissioned the C2005 review committee from representatives outside government in order to 'enhance independence' and the panel was made up mostly of academics. The Ministry of Education set the brief the panel was to work towards[4] and gave the team three months to provide a review document. During this time the team reviewed evaluations and review studies on C2005 (acknowledging weaknesses in methodological process). They also visited schools, carried out key informant and focus group interviews with teachers, heads of departments and principals. Questions they asked arose from gaps and queries arising from the document review, and in all over 25 schools were visited. Additionally over seventy interviews with representatives from a range of educational organisations were carried out. A call was made by radio and print-media for public submissions to widen the scope of the investigation, members of the public could respond to the review team directly. The review team noted that caution should be exercised here, because *"it is usually the voices of the powerful and literate that find their way into the realms of policy-making and evaluation"* (Review Committee on C2005, 2000). In total over 250 written submissions were received from individuals, school teachers and principals, school governing bodies, universities, educational organisations, teachers unions, education departments etc.

Report: The review produced a report, 'The Report of the Review Committee on C2005'. It made a number of recommendations which were included in the draft Revised National Curriculum Statement.

Draft Revised National Curriculum Statement: The impact of the review process on the Draft RNCS was vast. Included in the draft were recommendations made from the review, including calls to: a) revise and streamline the curriculum; b) remove of some of the complexities of C2005; c) simplify the language of the curriculum. Chisholm (2005) describes how the *"department sought broader legitimation"* of the RNCS by including curriculum developers from universities, NGOs and provincial departments in drafting the revisions. These participants were invited to apply and selected on criteria based on knowledge and experience, as well as the need to achieve racial, gender, and regional representation.

Public consultation: The Draft RNCS was then released for public comment for three months and made available on the DoE website and in other forms. At this time Kader Asmal stated that reports would be available in different languages, and *'"no one should feel excluded from the debate and from contributing"*. Responses were received from universities, NGOs, teachers, unions and provincial education departments. Chisholm also described the role

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[4] The panel was asked to look at the structure and design of the curriculum, teacher orientation, training and development, learning support materials, provincial support to teachers in schools, and implementation time-frames.

> **Communications in the revision of Curriculum 2005 in South Africa (cont)**
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> lobby groups played at this stage, with lobbies interested in the inclusion of particular content into the curriculum. She noted the public campaign from the Christian right and home-schooling constituency, *"jammed"* departmental and ministerial fax machines *"with petitions, letters, and appeals"* and *"inundated"* newspapers with letters (Chisholm, 2005). Yet she describes how this campaign had *"relatively limited impact"* and demonstrated, *"the non-linear relationship of voice and influence"* (Chisholm, 2005). Other large representations came from the vocational lobby, environmental lobby and the history lobby. The history lobby gained autonomous space in the curriculum, alongside geography in the social science learning area and environmental issues were infused throughout the curriculum. During this time public hearings were also held. She describes how these provided a platform for lobby groups in addition to teachers' unions and NGOs to express their views and claims this to be, *"a symbolic but also real manoeuvre to allow the democratic process to resolve the debate"* (Chisholm 2005)*.* However, Chisholm describes that, *"there was no simple or direct relationship between lobbies, voices, and interests, and their translation into the curriculum"* (2005).
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> **Revised National Curriculum Statement**: Once comments had been received the curriculum working groups of the Ministerial Project Committee reconvened to incorporate suggested improvements. The Revised National Curriculum Statement was the result of this. It was approved in April 2002.

The communication processes involved in the revision of the post-Apartheid South African curriculum were quite unique. There were a number of factors at play including supportive political leadership and timing of the reform. The Minister of Education displayed the desire to be seen to be as inclusive as possible. According to Chisholm the Government used participation as a means to create ownership and legitimation of the changes - the communication practices helped build a critical mass and validate the outcomes. Lugg further raises the point that channels for debate of this sort had to be re-opened as in the immediate aftermath of apartheid they had been closed off, and only when *"a renewed tolerance of critique"* was enabled could the debates around C2005 take place (Lugg, 2006).

E-consultations

There are some examples of online e-consultations in education, two of which are referred to here. In e-consultations[5] stakeholders are specifically being consulted on an issue (often around the release of a report), with information gathered up and used by the consulting body as they decide.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families[6] (DCSF) for England and Wales has pages on its website dedicated to e-consultations The aim is to *"open up decision making to as wide an audience as possible, making consultations more valuable"* (DCSF website)*.* Members of the public are able to view and respond to e-consultations and are allowed at least three months to make comments. The DCSF are obliged as part of their guidelines to *"give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy"*, but are under no obligation to take on the points.

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[5] E-fora on the other hand tend to have a greater focus on the exchange of information and ideas.

[6] Formerly Department for Education and Skills (DFES)

E-consultation on literacy for 2006 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR):
For three weeks in March 2005, the GMR held its first electronic consultation to *"capture a broad range of voices and concerns"* on literacy, the theme of its 2006 edition. It put a full draft of the GMR online for public comment and invited responses on any aspect of the report outline. There were also moderated online consultations on aspects of literacy. The consultation was addressed to individuals and organisations with experience in the field of literacy and education for all. Around 1500 individuals were invited to participate and they were asked to inform colleagues. There were 114 registered members, with 164 postings and 3,715 readers. The consultation was moderated by an expert in the field and an advisor to the 2006 GMR. At the end of each week, the moderator provided a summary of discussion and invited participants to further develop certain key themes. The GMR provided a summary document of the issues raised through the consultation process (see: GMR, 2005). It described how the online consultation had informed debates in the preparation of the GMR (the areas highlighted included conceptualisations of literacy, strategies to develop literacy and policies). Given the scope of this report, it is difficult to assess the extent to which these consultations actually impacted on the final GMR and other influencing factors which might have been involved. This would require further study.

2.1.2 Holding the education sector to account: public participation processes

In this section some of the public participation processes which are aimed at increasing accountability of the education sector are reviewed. Much of this is based on the work of civil society organisations and NGOs and a range of communication methods, which will be discussed. There is less (reported) evidence of individuals and communities on their own using these mechanisms to hold the education sector to account. Dissemination of information and knowledge building seem to be key to these processes. Indications of impact of these initiatives are often self-reported and sometimes anecdotal.

Promoting public participation in educational governance: HakiElimu

HakiElimu is an advocacy-based organisation in Tanzania supporting every child's right to basic education. It aims to do this through engaging the public in transforming schools and influencing policy making. This democratisation of participation is needed to push for meaningful change. HakiElimu works on a variety of levels and uses a range of communication mechanisms to engage the public.

Communications practices and processes in HakiElimu

The Media Unit uses radio, TV and newspapers to inform and generate debate among the public and it creates opportunities for public to have a voice. It focuses on giving voice to those who are usually excluded from the media, often through assisting them to write letters to newspapers. It has also published a guide on getting voices heard through the media, aimed at members of the public.

The Information Unit works to communicate key messages about education, democracy and related themes through publications, gathers public opinion by launching competitions, targets key audiences to share strategic information, and maintains the library and website (which holds a large range of outputs). HakiElimu produces books, working papers, newsletters, booklets, billboard posters, information sheets, calendars and posters to reach a range of audiences (communities, schools, academics, development practitioners and

Communications practices and processes in HakiElimu (cont)

the general public). Most publications are available in Swahili and English. They use these to raise levels of public debate about educational issues, provide information to develop governance and awareness about rights, make people aware of education policy (and use this as a mechanism to improve monitoring and public engagement in issues). HakiElimu has a large distribution channel and uses the post office and private companies, with recent improvements meaning distributions go directly to schools rather than government offices. Materials with few pages, such as calendars, posters and leaflets are often distributed as inserts in newspapers. HakiElimu described in 2005 how the distribution of electronic materials by email was discontinued because it was not valued by recipients. Their district staff have also posted 'good practices' on public notice boards in certain areas and as a result *"some learners have embraced new governance practices"*; and *"some issues ... raised led to practical action including ... the need for providing porridge for pupils, and the role of pupils' clubs and competitions to boost academic performance and attendance"*.

The Citizen Engagement Unit works with the Friends of Education, which is a citizens member group of over 18,000 members (HakiElimu, 2005). HakiElimu provides them with information; helps organise action; encourages community debate and fora; asks communities to monitor policy impact; promotes learning and networking among Friends and other citizens' groups; and analyses, synthesises and communicates the voice of the public in publications.

The Policy and Advocacy Unit works to engage with key policy processes; develop policy positions; enhance the capacity of other units to understand and engage with policy; conducts advocacy informed by public voices emerging from other unit; engages with key civil society coalitions and Members of Parliament.

The organisation appears to have a structure which facilitates internal communications between the different units, and in particular aims to get policy messages to communities and community messages to policy makers. It also develops networks between citizens through its own Friends of Education programme, and develops connections with them to link with other civil society organisations. These linkages are international as well as national, with HakiElimu's Annual Report in 2005 describing being 'inspired' by the work of a CSO in India, MKSS. It states, *"the film[7] depicts ordinary citizens coming to understand their situation and holding leaders accountable through 'public audits'. The aim is to learn from the Indian experience and spark debate on the relevance of such actions in Tanzania"* (HakiElimu, 2006). HakiElimu were reproducing the MKSS film for Tanzanian audiences, to be broadcast on TV.

HakiElimu has carried out some evaluation studies to look at its performance and impact. In one study which sent out evaluation forms with HakiElimu publications, they got 500 responses. The main types of responses they received around the uses of publications included the information being used as teaching tools; for personal learning; to improve schooling and to distribute with friends. A smaller number mentioned stimulating community discussion. There is also anecdotal evidence of its influence. For example, the 2005 Annual Report (HakiElimu, 2006) states *"the TV and radio spots clearly have tremendous impact in informing the public and stimulating debate"*. The 2005 Annual Report claims that 140 letters from Friends had been sent to government officials at district and national levels. The letters included

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[7] MKSS had produced a film of their work

opinions, grievances and reports on successes. The report goes on, *"in a few instances Friends have reported action having been taken in response to these letters. However, overall, the government response to issues raised appears to have been limited".* In 2005 HakiElimu's review of the government's performance in reaching Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) targets *"received wide press coverage"* and *"stimulated a wide public debate about the achievements and gaps in primary education"* - but little concrete evidence of these claims was supplied. However, when talking about impact, the report does not acknowledge issues of attribution and difficulties in attributing impact and change to one particular initiative. During the writing of this report, contact was made with HakiElimu about sources of information on impact, and while they indicated they had further evidence, they were unable to produce them in the short time available.

Public hearings

Public hearings are used to inform citizens about educational services, to allow citizens a public voice to air concerns and raise issues and to collect information from citizens. An example of public hearings was indicated in relation to policy making in South Africa, where stakeholders were able to comment on draft curriculum reforms (see above). Another example is Mazdoor Kisan Shakthi Sangathan (MKSS), an Indian CSO which organises public meetings in which detailed accounts of expenditure records and other documentation are read aloud to the public. These are supposed to raise citizens' awareness of goods and services that are supposed to be delivered to them and raise accountability of service provision. Community members are able to match what is received against what is expected. While much of MKSS's work seems to be around workers' rights, this idea could be developed more in education (see HakiElimu, above, who are adapting their work for use in education). There are other examples where this communication channel has been used in education but there is little documented evidence about them.

Citizen score and report cards

Score cards and report cards on education services are a tool being used by some advocacy organisations to generate public awareness, increase citizen engagement and accountability of educational providers. On these report cards information is provided that serves to assess the performance of educational providers against a set of criteria (often providing qualitative and quantitative data).

A '**School Report**' of fourteen developing countries in Asia Pacific was produced by the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) and the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) (ASPBAE and GCE, 2005) to highlight information on each country's commitment to basic education. Called 'Must Do Better' the report uses the format of a school report. It attempts to analyse whether governments are delivering on promises to provide free and quality basic education for all and the actions they have taken. It grades the performances of countries (Thailand and Malaysia get As; Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands all get Fs) and it ranks them comparatively against each other (with Thailand coming in first and Pakistan last). It aims to provide a *"guide for citizens to appraise governments' performance in education and what each country must do to improve".* There is little information on the circulation or the impact of these reports.

Since 2001, Programa de Promocion de la Reforma Educativa de America Latina y el Caribe (PREAL) has been creating national and regional report cards on education provision in Latin America (see: Goodspeed, 2006). Their report cards detail country-level data on key education indicators and regional

aggregates. The report cards aim to: provide reliable, concise and accessible information on education provision; promote transparency and accountability; create demand and strengthen civil society participation; foster a shared vision for improving education; and improve monitoring mechanisms. They provide analysis on nine subject areas: test scores; enrolments; retention; equity; standards; assessment; authority and accountability at school level; strengthening teaching; and investment in primary and secondary education.

The report card is an interesting way of communicating information because it apes the types of report cards schools give students and reverses the expected power dynamics around education. Goodspeed (2006) identifies some *"communication difficulties"* and raises questions around reaching target audiences, with, *"feedback from our teams suggest(ing) that we still aren't reaching some stakeholder groups effectively"*. To attempt to overcome this, PREAL is trying to increase distribution, use radio and television to disseminate findings, and adapt the language and length of publications to suit target audiences. The report (Goodspeed, 2006) produces a range of anecdotal evidence to suggest impact. For example: *"research suggests that rating and comparing schools energizes local communities to act for change"* (Southern Regional Education Board, 2000, in Goodspeed, 2006); the report cards have sparked *"vigorous national debate"*; the president of the Dominican Republic announcing his intention to use the national report card as the basis for a national dialogue on education; governments have used the report cards to help shape their policies and their products e.g. in Panama; in Honduras the report card was used as a source to outline government's education plans and EFA inputs. Having said this, although they have reached audiences, it seems uncertain whether the report cards have actually had impact and shaped debate at the policy and practice level, rather than just being an information source.

2.1.3 Research-policy linkages: complexities and impacts

There is some literature about the relationships between research and policy making, both in education and other sectors. Discussion often refers to the difficulties in the interaction: the *"uneasy relationship"* (Stone, 2002), the *"complexities of research to policy"* and the *"fragile dialogue"* (Unterhalter et al, 2003). While Stone (2002) suggests that, *"the common wisdom is that there is a lack of dialogue between researchers and policy makers and that inadequate or insufficient use is made of research findings"* this might be less the case for education. Indeed, there are also a number of examples within the education sector of attempts to bridge this divide. For example, in education, the UKFIET conference explicitly aims to bring together education researchers, policy makers and practitioners. This event takes place once every two years and is regarded as one of the key communication events in international and comparative education. Also, DFID Education Reports are distributed free to governments around the world, making research findings accessible to policymakers.

Unterhalter et al (2003) note three ways the relationship between researcher and policy maker can be identified: research as a technical input into policy making e.g. statistics to inform policy; critical policy analysis by researchers; and researchers participating in policy in complex formations and from multiple perspectives. There are also examples of researchers involving policy makers in research processes (see above) The focus of this section is mainly on Unterhalter et al's third example, and the multi-faceted, multi-directional, context-specific relationships. Indeed, Stone (2002) describes how:

'different policy environments, institutional structures and political arrangements produce different sets of opportunities and constraints for dialogue, call forth varying strategies for policy researchers and have dramatically diverse implications from one political system and/or policy sector to the next.'
Stone, 2002

Policymakers' capacity and desire to take on board the research findings differs, with research sometimes just used to confirm policy direction (Unterhalter et al, 2003:93; King et al, 2005). Some writers have documented these complex relationships in education (e.g. Unterhalter et al, 2003; Dyer, 1999).

There are often difficulties in attributing research findings to particular policy initiatives in practice. Research to policy processes take place in context-specific situations, where a range of social, economic and political factors interplay with one another. Information comes from many angles and influences in both direct and indirect ways. Coe et al (2002) suggest that, *"attributing change to the influence of specific interventions is a notoriously difficult pursuit ... it is typically problematic to attribute changed policy thinking to specific pieces of research; instead, it would be more legitimate to contend that a range of research inputs feed into and help shape the thinking"*. Through the examples below, some of these ideas are developed further.

Measuring impact of research communications initiatives: id21 Education

id21 aims to increase the influence of UK-funded development research through the communication of research findings and policy recommendations to policymakers and development practitioners world wide. id21 uses three main platforms: a website (with an Internet-based searchable database of over 1500 research highlights; email news bulletins; and Insights, a quarterly print review of current topical issues within development research). They aim to make products accessible and suitable for their target audience (policy makers) – for example, they moved to producing Insights and other paper-based versions in response to concerns that not everyone could access Internet/email versions. id21 Education is one element of the id21 structure. id21 has been grappling with the complexities of the relationships between research and policy for many years. Specifically, it has been concerned with its own impact and how it could improve impact by adjusting the services it offers.

In 2002 id21 commissioned an independent study which led to the report, 'id21: tracking routes towards impact' (Coe et al, 2002). The study combined data from in-country interviews with id21-users and target audience members; email and subscriber surveys and surveys of UK-researchers who had had research published through id21. The report summarised that, *"the dissemination methodologies id21 ... uses successfully enable the programme to play an important contributory role in research-to-policy processes, providing context and secondary evidence to policy formation, and adding to wider debate"*. They highlighted specific cases in which id21 had been directly influential in policy formation, by providing access to research information and providing a focus for discussion within government departments and planning commissions. Yet, examples of direct impact were few and tracking the processes of impact problematic. There were no examples of impact for education specifically.

Since then id21 has carried out a range of other activities to monitor its work and attempt to measure impact. For example, it has carried out country visits to meet with and interview target audience members. During a recent trip to India, an impact assessment was carried out on its work. Fifteen interviews took

place, but none specifically with educational professionals. One comment describes an EC member of staff and that she had referred to id21, but little evidence of what capacity it was used in and its subsequent impact:

'She used to work on education issues in the earlier job and remembers referring to an article by Padma Sarangapani (featured in an id21 education insights), in her work.'
id21, 2006a

It has carried out M&E research at conferences[8], speaking to target audience members about the id21 service and asking for examples of impact. In the field of education this most recently took place at the Conference for Commonwealth Education Ministers in Cape Town, South Africa, 2006. There was little concrete information on direct impact, but comments on impact include the following:

'Loves our stuff, uses it in her speeches, insights keeps her well-informed' (High Commission staff member).
 'Used quotes from id21 insights and gobbits in writing his policy suggestions and passed them on to colleagues' (Education Consultant).
 'Has used gobbits to inform his policy discussions with colleagues' (Education Advisor).
id21, 2007

id21 has developed a database to log comments and feedback from unsolicited respondents. One from an Education Advisor for an NGO comments, *"GREAT job on this (Insights) issue – I really love it".* There was nothing on subsequent impact (id21, 2006b).

While id21 Education is reaching a large number of people and there are positive comments about its form and content, there are understandable difficulties in measuring impact of their research outputs on education policy makers. Much evidence appears to be anecdotal and there is a lack of in-depth, context-specific analysis in the field of education. Much of id21's strength appears to be in reaching people and translating complex information into accessible formats. id21 adds value in giving educational actors information to inform, develop and generate ideas and arguments, which can be expected to have indirect influence. However, given the complexities in research-policy processes, tracking the flows of information and attributing impact directly to id21 appears to have been difficult. Indeed *"id21's function invariably tends to be a contributory one, adding to the debate, providing context and secondary evidence, rather than acting as a sole source. One consequence of this is to make it yet harder to track and pin down evidence of direct impact"* (Coe et al, 2002). More than anything this example illustrates the difficulties in measuring research to policy impact.

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[8] But this type of conference-based survey is not without tensions. A similar conference-based M&E study in the field of health generated the following comment from the id21 staff member: '... I had envisaged having much more interaction with conference participants than the interaction I had ... it seemed very inappropriate to try and talk to people about what they think of the way id21 packages information when we had just been affected by discussion (of an emotive issue) ... People involved ... rarely have the opportunity to be in the same room together and they wanted to empathise with each other about there (sic.) work and discuss ways of moving forward and collaboration. It did not seem very suitable that I was present and trying to look for impact of *id21insights'* (id21, n.d)

Building linkages into the research process: DFID research programme consortia and the GAPs project

There are examples of researchers building links with their target audiences during the research process in order to increase the impact of their research findings. The following two cases show how researcher-policymaker linkages are advanced through project and programme structures to enhance communications mechanisms.

National reference groups

DFID is currently funding three research programme consortia (RPCs) in education (CREATE, EdQual and Recoup). Each developing country institute in the three consortia has a national reference group (NRG) to provide guidance, monitor progress and enhance quality assurance[9]. NRG members consist of a mixture of respected analysts, senior officials, educational professionals, NGO members and opinion leaders. They meet approximately once every six months. The NRGs serve a number of key communications / dissemination roles: 1) NRG members are part of the target audiences the RPCs are trying to reach and many are at the core of relationship building and the strategising that surrounds country level policy dialogue. Thus, by including members of the target audience in the NRGs, messages will reach target audience members 2) NRG members are able to advise on research outputs and communications strategies relevant and suitable to both target audiences and the research environments. The NRG will help develop communication and influencing strategies; 3) NRG members might take messages from the RPCs elsewhere, into their networks and interactions with other target audience members.

While there is little known about the impact of these researcher-target audience linkages at this stage (research is in its initial stages) the use of NRGs has raised the profile of the research programme and in some cases it looks likely these linkages will have a significant influence on policy.

The Gender and Primary Schooling in Africa (GAPS) project

The GAPS research project ran from 1994 to 2000, covering nine sub-Saharan African countries. The focus was on identifying reasons why children were not in school, how these varied for boys and girls, and developing and costing strategies to address constraints (see Colclough et al, 2003 for an overview of the project). It involved a number of bilateral and multilateral funding agencies, and was undertaken under the auspices of the Forum of African Women Educationalists – FAWE. From the outset, the GAPS research was intended to involve educational planners and members of FAWE national chapters within the research process. The aim was to build their capacity in undertaking research which would enable them to draw on this knowledge directly for the formulation of educational planning in their countries. National researchers worked together with researchers based at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at Sussex throughout all stages of the work. Teacher trainers were also involved in data collection in some countries (e.g. Ethiopia) which enabled them to learn first-hand about some of the problems that local schools faced. The research resulted in a report in each country authored by national researchers, and published by FAWE and the IDS. The research was also disseminated via national workshops involving key stakeholders including
ministers of education, permanent secretaries of education, regional education advisors etc.

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[9] In Ghana where all three consortia are based, they share the NRG; consortium members from one project might also be present on other project's NRGs, if they are in the same country

There were varying degrees to which the research-policy process could be seen as successful. In certain countries (Ethiopia and Malawi) the research was able to link directly into key decision-making periods as new education strategy papers were being prepared at the time when the research was reaching completion. As those involved in the research were also part of the process of advising on the plans within the countries, they were able to refer to evidence from the studies to inform strategies. This could be considered to have resulted in a more prominent role for gender in the strategies than might otherwise have been the case. This was also made possible due to the enabling environment provided by the role played by the prominent women educationalist in the country (e.g. the Minister of Education in Ethiopia). It was however more difficult to establish how such policy changes led to impact in schools, for which there would be a time lag in implementation and other factors at play. In some cases, the direct link between researcher and planner was made difficult because once the government workers were trained, they were able to move on to more lucrative jobs with donor agencies and NGOs.

Research to policy change: the case of Muster

The Multi-Site Teacher Education Research Project ran from 1998-2002 and involved research partners from the UK, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Trinidad and Tobago and South Africa. Although there has been no formal impact assessment of the research project, personal communications with one of the researchers indicates the research led to a significant change in policy in Ghana. Dr Kwame Akyeampong (personal communication, 2007) claimed that the New Draft Bill for Education which should be passed in 2007, will recognise the status of unqualified teachers, where previously they had been unrecognised. This he claims is *"a direct result of the work carried out by Muster"*, which argued it would be impossible to replace untrained teachers with trained ones, particularly in rural areas. In the New Draft Bill the National Teachers Council will now be responsible for providing pathways to some sort of training for unqualified teachers. While this evidence is anecdotal, further study of research-policy linkages in Ghana might provide more substantiated support to this claim.

2.2 Global communications: shaping the agenda in international education

In this section two global initiatives are looked at in more detail, the use of global campaigning around a specific educational issue and the use of e-forums to encourage focussed discussion on a global scale.

2.2.1 Global campaigns: Education for All

In this section the report will look briefly at the global campaign of Education For All. It cannot go into the complexities of the approaches being adopted to tackle this issue, but it does raise some points to do with the role communications has had in shaping educational change. Education for All is key to international educational targets: Millennium Development Goals call for universal primary education by 2015 and the elimination of gender disparities in education by 2015.

Education For All

The Education for All movement brings together bilateral and multilateral agencies, INGOs, state and non-state providers of education, civil society organisations, schools and the private sector working towards common goals of educational access. The global nature of this movement means that communication initiatives take place between actors in international, national and local settings, in multiplicities of ways. Communication spaces and initiatives include:

Conferences on Education for All which bring together global educational stakeholders have taken place in Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000). Monitoring meetings and workshops take place at intervals between times. International coordination mechanisms at the global, regional and national levels such as the High-Level Group, the Working Group, the Collective Consultation of NGOs, E9 Initiative; South-south cooperation; regional mechanisms; and national mechanisms[10]. Thematic partnerships around specific issues: e.g. girls education (UNGEI), HIV & AIDS and Education (UNAIDS Inter-agency Task Team on Education; EDUCAIDS); Global Task Force on Child Labour and EFA.

The **Global Action Plan** is a global strategy developed to improve international and country-level coordination for EFA. It aims to clarify the roles of the five international agencies 'spearheading' the global EFA movement and define their coordinated, joint action at the global level.

The **Global Campaign for Education** (GCE), is a worldwide campaign to raise awareness of the importance of Education for All. GCE co-ordinates Global Action Week.

Global Action Week is an annual global event which focuses global activity and action around the Education For All movement. The aim is to get individuals and groups involved internationally, nationally and locally, including schools, teachers, pupils, NGOs, CSOs and international agencies. The focus of the 2007 campaign is on human chains of people around the world, coming together to claim education as a right and demand access for all. Mechanisms include an online chain which links people together, all (35,000 plus at present) to call for Education For All. There will be various lobbying, campaigning, information gathering and communication activities. Information on previous action weeks can be found on the GCE website.

Communication activities in relation to these global campaigns are multiple and work at a variety of levels. They might include: global action; deepening partnerships; building consensus; advocacy and lobbying activities; dissemination of materials; knowledge sharing and information exchange; monitoring of progress; improving co-ordination; fundraising

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[10] High-Level Group: Key decision-makers meet once a year to sustain and accelerate political momentum for EFA and to mobilise resources; Working Group: Annual to provide technical guidance on key issues and recommending priorities for collective action; Collective Consultation of NGOs: Mechanism for dialogue and joint reflection and action with civil society, linking several hundred international, regional and national NGOs; E-9 Initiative: Focusing on nine high-population countries; South-South Cooperation: Promoting cooperation among developing countries of the South, to facilitate knowledge-sharing and mutual assistance; Regional Mechanisms: Regional and sub-regional fora; National Mechanisms: National coordinators and fora established to promote progress towards the EFA goals at the country-level (UNESCO website).

partnerships; international decades; public-private partnerships; and research. Factors such as a supportive political environment, strong civil society networks and sustained donor commitment add to the likelihood of success. It is likely that the EFA movement has had a wide range of impacts: for example, on the direction of educational funding, policy making, shaping educational demand and supply. In some countries there have been improvements in access (e.g. Bangladesh), but in others less so. Yet, as in other studies of impact, it might be difficult to allot direct rather than indirect attribution.

2.2.2 E-forums in education

While they are becoming a more used communication mechanism, the use of e-forums in education is still in its infancy, with other sectors such as health using these forums more frequently. E-forums are online mechanisms generally used for the exchange of ideas, networking and communicating information (rather than the e-consultation mechanisms above). E-forums are most likely to be used by international agencies, INGOs and national education systems where there are more advanced Internet communication networks and as a result there are questions about who has access to such forums. There are some examples in education:

Approaches by Competencies (UNESCO IBE): there have been two e-forums in recent years on this subject, the latest lasting three weeks at the end of 2006. The aim was to provide space for the *"inter-regional sharing of experiences of curriculum change and development based on the approaches by competencies"*. A document was used to shape the discussion and the discussion was 'animated' through a series of questions.

HIV/AIDS clearinghouse (UNESCO IIEP): the clearinghouse aims to support professionals in educational planning and management in the context of HIV/AIDS. One part of its web activities includes discussion forums where people are able to, *"Share experiences, keep up-to-date with conferences and publications, ask and respond to questions and engage in debates on matters of mutual interest"*. Discussions take place around a number of topics, sub topics and documents. Participants can initiate discussions or contribute to existing discussions.

2.3 Policy to practice: communicating messages to schools and communities

Traditional policy level messages reach schools directly from government or via the local education authority in a more decentralised system. Schools are generally the end-spaces where centrally made decisions are enacted. Policy tends to be top-down, but the social spaces of schools mean they can be interpreted and re-interpreted in multiplicities of ways in the implementation phase. The independence of schools to reinterpret policy is enhanced if monitoring systems and connections with local and national education authorities are weak. A lack of ownership of the policy and training also undermines the likelihood it will be enacted in practice. Various research studies look at gaps in policy to practice in all aspects of education and some of the processes which impact on this (see: Ansell, 2002; Dyer, 1999; Kadzamira & Rose, 2001; Hunt, 2007; Vally & Dalambo, 1999). These might include: staff subverting policy to suit individual/group needs; problematic schooling relations; lack of training, understanding and dissemination of policy directives; inability to action policy given local schooling contexts; over-ambitious and unrealistic policy demands. In this respect, Jansen (2001) identifies the possibility in some cases of 'symbolic' policy, where policy is developed in education, but with little systemic drive to ensure changes take place in practice.

In the rest of this section there are two examples where government has gone outside the usual policy-practice route within the education system, to communicate with schools and communities.

2.3.1 Using radio and TV to communicate educational messages

FM radio broadcasts are quite common phenomena in many African countries reaching both urban and poor communities (Dunne et al, 2007), with as many as one in four people owning a radio and many more having access through sharing and group listening (Myers, 2004). Access to TV is less prevalent. There are various ways radio and TV can be used to communicate educational messages. The most traditional is through public service broadcasts. However, radio and TV drama / soap operas allow ways of exploring emotional and psychological subjects and provide listeners with a variety of options and suggestions around issues. While health issues appear to be raised frequently in radio drama, there appears to be less of a focus on education. Some examples include, Tembea a Ki-Swahili radio soap opera programme which goes on air twice a week in Kenya, and reaches 5.5 million adult listeners. It tackles a wide range of issues, one having been parental power within schools. Building for the Future is the first in a series of DFID-funded videos in East Africa. It shows the community involvement of rural villagers both to construct and engage in the management of their local schools and hopes to promote a sustainable strategy whereby teachers, schools and parents are innovators in education. Another example is a series of short radio spots on formal education issues such as enrolment of girls in school and changing teacher attitudes to corporal punishment, developed and broadcast in Afghanistan (see Media Support website).

The BBC World Service Trust also implements some innovative programmes to address educational needs in post-conflict Afghanistan. These include a series for out-of-school children, the REACH project (Radio Education for Afghan Children), which provides a varied menu of general knowledge, culture, stories and other stimuli to children's imagination. It is broadcast 3 times weekly on the BBC Pashtu and Dari language services. Another major BBC-AEP (Afghanistan Education Program) production in Afghanistan is the long-running educational soap opera 'New Home New Life', broadcast 3 times weekly in the two major Afghan languages and using the soap opera format to raise a wide variety of social issues, including health, education, conflict resolution, children's rights etc. The radio series has a strong community research component and an advisory committee with NGOs and donor organisations. Storylines are developed on the basis of input from both local communities and the aid community. The radio series also publishes a regular magazine, designed for people of limited literacy, which carries the main storylines of the radio series in a cartoon format, as well as a range of other books.

Equal Access is a non-profit organisation which uses AM/FM and satellite radio broadcasts (thus reaching communities out of reach of terrestrial radio signals) to provide information and education to marginalised, poor and remote communities who are often underserved by traditional education and communication channels. Some Equal Access programmes combine satellite radio broadcasts with facilitated listener groups on the ground, thereby combining the advantages of broadcast communication with those of face-to-face communication.

2.3.2 Informing citizens and improving accountability of education providers: Uganda

The following example describes how the Ugandan government initiated a newspaper campaign in the late 1990s to communicate information around school budgets to schools and parents in order to monitor local officials' handling of a large school grant programme (Reinikka & Svensson, 2004). Central government published accounts of monthly transfers of these capitation grants to local governments (districts) in two newspapers[11]. In 1997 the Ministry of Education required schools to post notices on actual receipts of funds for all to see:

> 'In this two-part campaign, information on entitlements transferred by the central government was made available through newspapers, while information on what each school actually received was posted at schools to inform parents.'

Reinikka & Svensson, 2004

Many schools complained or protested to some formal or informal authority that could transmit the complaints onwards or act on them. Evidence suggests there was substantial impact on redirecting finances back to schools. Hauge and Mackay describe how a public expenditure tracking study (PETS) carried out in 1996 showed only 13%[12] of government annual non-salary expenditures for primary education (capitation grants) reached schools, but after the public campaign, a repeat PETS in 2001, showed at least 80% was reaching the intended schools (Hauge and Mackay, 2004).

Reinikka and Svensson's research has explored this evidence further. They argue that improved access to public information can be used as a tool to reduce capture and corruption, and that distance to the nearest newspaper outlet was positively correlated with head teachers' knowledge of the rules governing the grant program, as well as reduction in the diversion of school funds. They argue that by *"focusing on service providers' accountability to policymakers alone, the idea is to engage citizens at the bottom of the public service delivery chain by providing easy access to information on the workings of public programs intended for their benefit. This empowers citizens to demand certain standards, to monitor service quality, and to challenge abuses by officials with whom they interact"* (Reinikka & Svensson, 2004). In this respect, *"schools in poor communities, less able than others to claim their entitlement from district officials before the campaign but just as likely in 2001, benefited most"* (2004).

2.4   Communications in and around schools

There are a number of spaces in and around schools to facilitate communications between community members, parents, staff and students. These spaces have the potential to connect people, encourage voice and democracy, increase locally-based ownership of educational processes and develop agency and action. There is less information on how these bodies feed back information to local and national education authorities. This report will look briefly at community-school linkages through school governing bodies,

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[11] The newspapers had also carried stories on misuse of the capitation grant funds and on school entitlements and responsibilities under the universal primary education program.
[12] Although Reinikka and Svensson claim this was 20 cents on average of every dollar. Also stating: Schools, which had received only 24% on average of the total yearly grant from the central government in 1995, received more than 80% in 2001.

community sensitisation programmes and staff-student/student-student linkages through student councils.

2.4.1 Community participation and voice: school governing bodies

In recent years there have been increased calls in education planning for community members to be more involved in the management, financing and decision-making in schools. Research suggests that community involvement can enhance a sense of ownership of the school, increase forms of democracy and accountability of education providers, and might in some cases improve educational attendance. School committees, parent teacher associations and school governing bodies are all ways to get community members (often parents) involved with schools, and provide a link between the community and the school. Educational systems have different approaches to community involvement in schools. South Africa for example has made it compulsory for each school to have a school governing body (with parents in the majority), with tasks such as budgetary management, teacher recruitment and school policy development, while other countries do not insist on this.

There have been several critiques of community involvement in school management in practice, *"the evidence in Malawi indicates that the school committee structures created to facilitate the process of community involvement in decision-making are often ineffective and weak. The ineffectiveness of school committees has been attributed to lack of experience and training of committee members, and lack of clear guidelines indicating how they should operate"* (Kadzamira & Ndalama, 1997 in Rose, 2003). Research from Suzuki in four schools in Uganda highlights tensions between staff and students on these bodies. Head teachers in two of the schools withheld information from community members about financing, community members felt intimidated by unequal power relations and head teachers tended to dominate proceedings. The indirect representation of the majority of parents on these bodies, meant that most of them *"do not perceive that they are involved"* in the school management committee (Suzuki, 2002). So while spaces for forms of communication have been opened up through these bodies, there are still questions about whose voices are heard and who controls these bodies. Research tends to assess processes and forms of participation in education, while noting the difficulties of identifying direct impacts on schooling.

2.4.2 Getting information to communities: community sensitisation programmes

USAID, working with local NGOs and community groups, supports community sensitisation programmes in a number of countries. Community sensitisation involves meetings with local communities (including parents, teachers, community leaders and local authorities) to raise awareness of issues, for example, the importance of education, girls' education, re-integration of former child soldiers and child trafficking. In some areas (e.g. Zambia) popular theatre has been used to facilitate community participation in designing solutions to a number of issues related to increasing girls' and other vulnerable children's attendance and retention in school. The premise is that by giving communities information and raising awareness around these issues, communities will be more likely to actively engage with schools and encourage access. There is some documented evidence of the success of community sensitisation programmes (e.g. Williamson, 2006; USAID, 2007).

2.4.3 Student participation and voice: student councils

Student councils are often set up in schools to give students a space to voice ideas and opinions, a democratic say in how the school is run and get students

actively involved in schools. The limited research on councils has criticised schools for generating an illusion of engagement with councils, often giving them little decision-making power or authority. In many countries, the impetus for establishing student councils takes place at the school level, but in South Africa it is the law for each secondary school to have a representative council of learners[13] (RCLs). South Africa also has city councils and city parliaments for students to communicate over issues. An in-depth study of RCLs in four secondary schools in South Africa (Hunt, 2007) showed the councils working very differently in each of the schools, with the staff-students relations in particular, acting both as control and limiting mechanisms for student voice and action. While two of the councils could be described as 'tokenistic', with limited effectiveness, the other two did provide an impetus or voice for change, particularly in relation to achievement of constitutional rights. In one school council members called for teachers to stop using corporal punishment and in the other students asked for the religious content of assemblies to be changed (and more representative of the multi-religious student population). With the consent of staff members (some) changes in both schools were made, although ultimately staff decided what these were. In two of the schools the RCL also forged links with other local schools to develop local initiatives and opportunities e.g. an AIDS awareness day; student camps. While these examples show the benefits of student council engagement at the local level (often dependent on compliance from members of staff), there might also be improved possibilities for councils to link up to local education authorities to increase voice and improve monitoring mechanisms.

2.5 Information communication technologies (ICTs): opening up spaces and opportunities?

While ICTs are not the central focus of this paper, they can play an important role in education provision and provide a communication role within the education sector. ICTs are used in a multitude of ways and between different educational stakeholders to: communicate and disseminate information; facilitate teaching and learning; and allow people to interact with each other, exchange ideas and perspectives. Whilst the paper provides examples in the previous sections which incorporate the use of ICTs: e.g. the use of radio, TV and the Internet to disseminate information this section will look more at ICTs in respect to teaching and learning initiatives and information provision/exchange. Although there is considerable rhetoric about the use of computer and Internet technologies, radio appears to be the most cost-effective form of ICT (InfoDev, 2007). In many cases the impact of ICTs in improving educational access, quality and outcomes has yet to be researched – this paper draws on the evidence which does exist.

2.5.1 Computer and Internet technologies and education: the new ICTs

There is some debate around the role computers and Internet technology can and should play in education in developing countries. Sayed (2003) describes two sets of responses: those who see this technology widening the divide between rich and poor, between countries and within countries; and others who see it offering countries the ability to catch up quickly in terms of development. While there is little space to go into this in detail, these technologies provide a number of advantages for teaching and learning: for example, access to information and knowledge is enhanced; communications networks between people living distances apart can be developed, with the opportunity to assist

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[13] in addition to student representation on the school governing body.

distance education programmes; and quality in teaching and learning can be developed.

However there remain questions around accessibility of this technology, costs and sustainability of uptake. These points will be looked at briefly. Within and between countries there seem to be issues around equality of access to new ICTs. InfoDev (2007) suggest that these technologies are seen to preferentially advantage schools and learners in urban areas and in locations where existing infrastructure is best (InfoDev, 2007). This implies that in many countries, the rural poor who are already more disadvantaged, are less likely to have access to new ICTs. Between countries there are also large digital divides. For example, according to statistics from Internetworldstats.com in 20 countries in Africa less than 1% of the population is an 'Internet user'; and 5 countries are home to 67.5% of 'Internet users' (South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Morocco and Sudan). In Asia there are 8 countries with less than 1% of the population being an 'Internet user', but 5 countries having over 60% users. One huge inhibitor to the use of new ICTs in education in developing countries is costs. Costing the use of computer and Internet technology has to take into account equipment costs, sustainability and upkeep, software, training and ongoing Internet access costs. There are ways that savings can be made, but InfoDev warns that *"donated and refurbished equipment can carry significant costs"* (InfoDev, 2007). Indeed, Power (2006) gives examples in South African schools where donated computer equipment was not used in one school because staff and students didn't have the skills to use it, and in another because the necessary cables were not supplied. He states, *"the argument that using 'free' suites of ageing PCs is the most appropriate (even the only) response to the information needs of the Global South needs to be approached with some caution"* (Power, 2006).

An evaluation of the Schoolsnet programme in Namibia (Ballantyne, 2003) suggests that costs could be cut by using volunteers, open source operating systems, and discounted or free connectivity. Research by UNESCO (cited by InfoDev, 2007) claims deploying computers in secondary schools (rather than primary schools) might be more cost effective in the short run as there are stronger curricular arguments for investment (and fewer secondary schools). Studies suggest that computers in schools may be most cost-effective when placed in common areas, and the potential of mobile technologies should also be promoted (Leach, 2005). While initial investments in the computer technology might be made, in many cases teachers still require training and skilled IT workers should be available, if this technology is to be utilised and sustainable. Sayed claims that*, "many education technology projects in the developing world have failed to realise their goals because parts and technicians were unobtainable locally and staff were not sufficiently trained to make the most of the technology"* (Sayed, 2003). Indeed the Schoolsnet evaluation (Ballantyne, 2003) advocated partnerships with specialised partners in areas like e-learning and content development.

Pryor and Ampiah looked at the use of new ICTs in a rural Ghanaian village after various pieces of technology had been installed. They carried out ethnographic research on how the socio-economic contexts of village life had implications for both attitudes towards education and the potential uptake and sustainability of new ICTs. There were a number of reservations about the *"capacity of information technology to bridge the digital divide either globally or within low income countries"*. But it did provide suggestions where technology was available. In particular it noted the potential for village information technology centres, powered by solar power and satellite communication technology, to *"catalyse community spirit and inspire culturally appropriate virtual learning environments"* (Pyor and Ampiah, 2003).

There are a number of research projects working on new ICTs and education (and InfoDev indicates there are a number of areas where research could be focused[14]), which are developing a knowledge-base around new ICTs and education. The Digital Education Enhancement Project (DEEP) is a research and development project focusing on the potential of new ICTs to improve teacher education and the quality of pupil learning in schools serving poor communities. The project's research questions focus on the impact of ICT on learner achievement and motivation and teachers' pedagogic knowledge. Areas of research include m-learning, costs of ICTs in education, teacher development through the use of ICTs and the potential use of ICTs in rural, poor neighbourhoods.

2.5.2 Distance education and ICTs

Distance education programmes are increasingly reliant on the use of ICTs. Different communications technologies can be used including radio and television, audio/video, computer and Internet technology and open-source software, such as Moodle (to develop online learning communities). There is evidence that print still plays a prominent part in distance education programmes, with most programmes using print either as the main delivery technology for coursework or in conjunction with other media and technologies. Communications in distance education programmes are around access to course materials, interactions with tutors and other learners, they are usually designed using a package of courseware, designed for independent study. There are particular contexts where distance learning seems to be promoted, educating rural communities, in teacher training and higher education. To follow are examples of the use of ICTs in these various settings.

Higher education: using ICTs

Research from Burkle (2003) tracks the introduction of computer and Internet technology into a private HEI in Mexico, which has over 30 campuses in Latin America and 80,000 students. ITESM introduced computer laboratories, new software and Internet connections throughout the campuses and students were expected to buy laptops. Staff can now give lectures and communicate with students in remote locations. Students use the technology to develop independent learning, collaborative work and have communications with lecturers. Some limitations to this massive programme of development were identified: poor access to telephone lines and computers; the cost implications and uncertainty from lecturers about expectations this technology places on them. Using ICTs in this context, Burkle argues, was reliant on a willingness to change, the technological infrastructure in place; the development of lecturers' skills; the commitment of those involved and adequate training programmes.

The Open University is a UK-based distance learning university, with potential relevance for developing country contexts. The university has around 150,000 undergraduate and more than 30,000 postgraduate students, the majority of whom are studying part time. Students learn in their own time reading course material, working on course activities, writing assignments etc. but are supported through this process by tutors and student service staff – often online. Some courses include a residential or day school held at various times and locations. A variety of media are used in the teaching and learning process, for example, printed course materials, set books, audio cassettes, video cassettes,

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[14] For example, there is limited research evidence on the impact of ICT use on learning outcomes and student achievement; the costs of ICT in education initiatives, including cost-effectiveness, on-going recurrent costs; the 'scaling up' of ICT in education initiatives.

TV programmes, CD-ROM/software, the web site. Students work towards formal qualifications through the completion of modules. Learning resources are also available on the Open Learn website allowing *"free higher education for everyone"*. The Open University's mission is to provide educational opportunities to all people who wish to realise their ambitions. It is committed to promoting equality and social justice and within the UK the OU is able to reach people whose ability to access other forms of higher education has been limited. Similar programmes exist in developing countries, for example the Allama Iqbal Open University in Pakistan.

Primary and secondary schooling: Radio and TV broadcasts

Radio and TV can also be used for direct class teaching, where broadcasts provide a temporary substitute for teachers. Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) consists of 20-30 minute direct teaching and learning exercises, developed around specific learning objectives. They are available throughout the world, and their primary objective is to raise the quality of learning, not just to expand educational access. Research suggests IRI has had a positive impact on learning outcomes and on educational equity. An interesting example of an IRI programme is one set up in Nigeria for the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE), where radio broadcasts provide distance learning to the children and adult nomadic pastoralists, farmers and fisherman, who migrate over vast areas. Telesecundaria in Mexico carries out direct class teaching via TV in order to provide a cost-effective strategy for expanding lower-secondary schooling in small and remote communities. Centrally produced television programs are beamed to Telesecundaria schools, covering the same secondary curriculum as that offered in ordinary schools. Reports suggest studying with Telesecundaria may have an impact on access, with lower drop out rates than general secondary and technical schools. There are some constraints to IRI. To be most effective IRI should be adequately resourced with supporting print materials and teacher training. IRI requires a very long period for development of materials before being implemented in classrooms and its long-term financial sustainability relies on the availability of government funding for broadcast costs/air time, or on free air time from a state broadcaster. In organisational terms the country's education system needs to operate the same timetable in all schools nationwide, which may be problematic in schools (often in rural areas serving marginalised groups) offering more flexible schooling timetables.

Teacher education: Radio teacher training

Radio Teacher Training (RTT) was developed as part of the USAID-funded Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) to build the capacity of teachers. Short radio programmes (12 minutes duration) were broadcast daily for a period of two years (2004-6) and included interviews with teachers and students, recordings from real classes and also special studio classes to demonstrate specific teaching activities. A topic in teaching methodology was introduced in the first programme each week, and on each of the next five days it was illustrated through a lesson in a different school subject, based on lessons in the Ministry of Education textbooks currently in use in schools. This aspect of tying the methodology to the materials actually available in normal schools was a key aspect of the overall RTT project. The aim was to ensure that what was broadcast could actually be implemented by teachers with limited education of their own, faced with large classes, severely limited materials and very inferior textbooks. On the seventh day there was an episode of a weekly serial drama addressing such broader educational issues as community participation, education of girls and the need for female teachers. The daily radio programs were broadcast on the State radio station, an international radio station, over 30 local and community radio stations, and on satellite radio by Equal Access (see above). CD copies of the radio programmes were also made available to the

Ministry of Education, teacher training colleges and mentors in the Accelerated Learning programme for over-age school students. The radio programmes were supported by field promotion and monitoring teams in several provinces.

Due to dangerous security conditions in many areas, it was not possible to conduct statistically reliable audience surveys; however, research in relatively safe districts indicated that by the end of the project the series had built an audience of over half the country's teachers listening at least once a week. It showed that classroom practices had been influenced in several key areas such as the willingness of students to question teachers, students working together in groups, and teachers using locally available materials as teaching aids. A current extension of RTT work in Afghanistan involves the production of a series of teacher training videos, for use by MoE in Teacher Training Institutes and Teacher Resource Centres, for both pre-service and in-service teacher education. The strategy here is that the videos will give teachers a clearer idea of what modern teaching should actually look like in an Afghan context, and hopefully enhance uptake.

In a related project (with funding from USAID) 10,000 teachers were enrolled to follow specific modules of the RTT course and provided with print support materials. Assessment included written pre- and post-tests to assess knowledge of modern teaching concepts and classroom observation and how far knowledge was applied in practice. The final report of one module of this project concluded that:

> 'Analysis of the pre-test and post-test data for teachers … clearly indicates that teachers benefited significantly from the program … RTT's contribution to improvement of teachers' knowledge of student-centered instructional techniques and attitudes about the best ways to interact with students was a tangible, practical, and genuine contribution to their professional development.'
> CAII, 2006

A further RTT programme has also been developed in Liberia, aimed specifically at teachers in the Accelerated Learning Program (for over-age students who missed out on schooling because of the civil war). This project is on a smaller scale, and includes regular listening groups and facilitators with discussion questions on each programme. The radio programmes are also longer (30 minutes duration); this allows topics to be explored in greater detail, but reduces the appeal of the programmes to commercial radio stations. In Liberia, the programmes are broadcast by local community radio stations, which are willing to allocate this amount of air time to programmes with such a restricted target audience.

2.5.3 Access to information and resources

In this section the report looks at different forms of access to information and resources. While the first entry describes the more traditional example of mobile library services, the two later examples develop this idea, giving examples for the online context. As with other ICT initiatives, who has access to these materials remains an issue, and it is likely that different approaches to communications suit audiences differently. Moreover, some of these approaches rely on people having had access to education in order to access them (e.g. acquiring books from libraries requires those accessing the books to be able to read them).

Mobile libraries

There are a number of mobile libraries in developing countries, some of which have been documented (Lucas, 2002; Saladyanant). Saladyanant describes the traditional mobile library services developed through Chiang Mai University in Thailand, which aims to give access to reading materials to children and young adults in suburban and rural areas, who lack library services (it would also support lecturers and library science students). The project delivers books to children and tries to develop good reading habits. Currently books are being delivered on a monthly basis to children in hill tribes, where communities then circulate the books amongst themselves. These mobile libraries are available in other countries and are often facilitated through local community organisations (e.g. Nepal via NEST). More recently Lucas describes how mobile libraries can be a way of giving students access not only to reading materials, but also to information technology for education (Lucas, 2002).

Commonwealth of Learning: Learning Object Repository

The Commonwealth of Learning, an intergovernmental organisation to encourage the development and sharing of open learning/distance education knowledge, resources and technologies, has two online databases of learning content that aims to support learning in Commonwealth countries free of charge. Open Courseware provides free and open educational resources for educators and learners. The Learning Object Repository supports teachers and lecturers with access to resources to develop learning materials and resources.

UNESCO-IIEP: Open Education Resource Commons

The Open Education Resource Commons is a teaching and learning network of shared materials, available online and open to anyone. OER is an open learning network where teachers and professors can access their colleagues' work materials, share their own and collaborate on work.

2.5.4 Exchanging ideas: opening up the debates

ICTs can be used to connect people in a range of educational contexts, and as opportunities develop, it is likely these fora will be enhanced. The following example of school twinning programmes, appears to have educational benefits to schools. Materials are available at a range of levels and in different subject areas.

School twinning schemes

School twinning schemes exist which serve to link schools throughout the world, with many of these linking schemes relying on ICTs to aid communications. In terms of benefits to teaching and learning, school twinning schemes can develop a sense of global awareness and citizenship in teachers and pupils; they can provide resource materials and also teach communication and ICT skills. A number of schemes operate these programmes One study (Save the Children, 2006) which looked at a scheme linking schools in six countries was generally positive but described some difficulties with the technology, coordinating curriculum benefits and the interest/ICT skills of staff. Reports of impact relate to student knowledge and skills development.

3   Conclusions

This paper outlines some of the academic and development arguments around communications and education, and provides examples of communications in education. It focuses on the spaces of communication, and identifies some of the processes and impacts from these examples. The report has policymakers and those who influence policymakers as its target audience, but some of the points it raises provide useful information for a range of educational actors. It does not aim to be a comprehensive account of communications in education as the field is vast, often unrecorded and would require an in-depth study.

The study makes a number of key practical points around spaces, processes and impacts of communications in education:

- providing channels and spaces for communications in education offers prospects for engagement and participation by stakeholders, many of whom are frequently excluded from such opportunities

- providing information to communities about educational services can encourage public participation in education activities

- there are various ways of communicating to people and different people have different abilities to access communication channels and spaces. Factors influencing access might include levels of literacy, access to ICTs and perceived demand. Communicators need to take this into account when planning and developing communication strategies and spaces

- communications channels and spaces can exclude the most marginalised. NGOs and CSOs can mediate these exclusions and highlight those voices in national and international debates

- broadcast media (especially radio) can be an effective means to provide educational inputs to certain communities with restricted access to more formal/traditional schooling options. These might include: rural and nomadic communities, post-conflict and transitional societies (where the infrastructure of schooling is often depleted) and teachers working in remote areas who have had little access to teaching methodologies

- dynamics of power inform spaces and processes of communication. Individuals and groups in positions of power can frequently dictate whose voices are heard and how communication channels are used

- including children and parents in consultation processes, is likely to raise issues around education

- positive and supportive communications environments can be created in education. System-wide support to

communications initiatives and the long-term backing of key
educational stakeholders enhance these processes

- there are some examples of communications making a
  positive difference in education, but information on impact is
  limited. This is because there is lack of documentary
  evidence and difficulties with attribution

- effective communications can be costly, time-consuming and
  require capacity enhancements. In some contexts it might be
  more difficult than others to pursue certain approaches to
  communication

- increasing the range of people and groups involved in
  communications can have positive and beneficial impacts on
  educational provision. It can also help increase a sense of
  ownership, awareness of rights and enhance mechanisms to
  claim these rights

In terms of the topic of communications in education, a number of concluding
points can be raised. Firstly, while communication constantly takes place in
education, there is a limited recording of these communication processes and
impacts, so our knowledge-base is weak. Secondly, measuring the impact of
communications in education is difficult because of the multiplicity of causal
factors at play. Studies on impact of communications and education, rarely
account for these complexities. And thirdly, education may learn from
communications approaches and initiatives in other sectors e.g. health, where
there appears to be a significant focus on communications and more innovative
practice. As such a number of gaps in our knowledge of the impact of
communications in education remain. These include: who becomes included
and who remains excluded from communication processes; how these
marginalised groups (possibly illiterate, poor, rural, remote) might be included
further; the benefits of doing this; the relationships and interactions between
educational stakeholders at all levels and possibilities for development; and the
particular factors which might enhance possibilities for impact and change.
While the evidence base related to the role of communications in education is
limited this does not mean activities and impacts are not taking place, yet
without this evidence, informing policy debates about its importance might be
problematic. This paper serves to provide information on the role of
communications in education which can be developed and enhanced in the
future.

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