



Seminar and workshop series:

RESEARCH COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Upon initiative of the Danish Development Research Network ([DDRN](#)), the three Danish research networks, DDRN, Danish Water Forum ([DWF](#)) and Danish Research Network for International Health ([ENRECAHEALTH](#)), will organise a series of seminars and workshops on research communication, starting in May 2008. The seminar series will touch upon several approaches and methods for framing research based knowledge in proper ways according to the goal of the specific communication process.

1. Objective

By engaging their members in the seminars and workshops on research communication, the networks aim to:

- **Promote the use of research based knowledge in development practice:** Foster dialogue among stakeholders; provide inspiration for useful communication processes; embed research results in the local context where research is carried out.
- **Help bringing development research on the public agenda:** Strengthen contacts to the media; make development research more visible in Denmark (and countries in the South).
- **Strengthen the communication skills of the members of the networks:** Provide tools and methods to enhance and improve engagement in communication processes and presentations of research and project results.

2. Background

The background for focussing on research communication derives from:

- A need for more effective application of research based knowledge expressed by network members in DK and the South, especially development practitioners, e.g. the need for access to more 'digestible' research based knowledge (see forthcoming DDRN Communication Needs Assessment);
- Follow up activities started at the University of Copenhagen after the workshop organised by ENRECAHEALTH on March 6, 2008 on "[Research Communication: How to Develop Research Based Policy Briefs](#)";
- A strong international focus and momentum for research communication, e.g. at UK Department for International Development ([DFID](#)), Overseas Development Institute ([ODI](#)), Institute for Development Studies ([IDS](#)), Swedish Programme for ICT in Developing Regions ([SPIDER](#));
- The development of new communication tools and potentials;
- A growing focus at universities in Denmark on communicating research results to the public and strengthening their development research profiles.

Furthermore, in a time of fast changes at global level there is a growing need for quick and effective communication of research based knowledge that may have positive influence on meeting a series of global challenges related to e.g. climate changes, agricultural production, and health issues.

In the seminar series, research communication is thus mainly seen with a view of improving the impact of research and promoting change and development. Effective implementation of research results is hindered by many factors; often due to structural challenges. This stresses the importance of seeing and working with communication as much more than communicating results at the end of the research process, but more as a process linking the stakeholders involved in the context which is being 'researched'.

The concept of communication applied in the seminars thus involves understanding **communication as a two-way process of dialogue including engagement of all stakeholders involved in the researched context**.

Holding a seminar/workshop series on research communication is also a way of promoting exchange of experiences across member groups and promoting cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural dialogue.

3. Contents of seminars

The series will start with a general introduction on research communication to stress the importance of and challenges facing effective research communication. Afterwards, a series of approaches and tools will be introduced. The first two themes to be addressed are:

- **“Research communication – Why and how?”: May 8, 2008, Copenhagen.** To give an overall introduction to the field and focus on the potentials of strengthening research communication activities. The seminar will be based on experiences from international main players working with development research communication, including the Institute for Development Studies ([IDS](#)), Science and Development Network ([SciDev.Net](#)), and the DFID funded Research Into Use ([RIU](#)) Programme. This seminar will also serve to address issues of main interest to the members and to be focused on in the following seminars. Aimed at all stakeholders with an interest in using and producing research based knowledge.
- **“Video Stories - digital opportunities for communication in research for development” May 19, 2008, Copenhagen, and May 20, 2008, Aarhus.** Participants will be introduced to digital video primarily as a tool that can be used to strengthen dialogue, information sharing, participation and learning in research and development projects, and between projects and wider society. The seminar is aimed primarily at young researchers who are about to carry out an internship or field study in the South, but is also open to ‘established’ researchers, NGOs, and other interested members.

The themes for autumn 2008 and first half of 2009 will be decided upon after the first seminar and will depend on the interest of the members of the networks. Suggested themes so far include:

- “Development research in the media”: What makes a good story for the Danish media? Useful examples from international organisations linking media and development researchers (e.g. [Panos](#), [Relay](#)).
- “From research to policy”: Making knowledge work is a political process. How can research results reach the decision makers and make a difference, e.g. policy briefs? Discussion of the whole process of influencing policy processes (e.g. Overseas Development Institute ([ODI](#)), [Rapid](#)).
- “New media”: New tools open up for new ways of communicating. How can these contribute to better informed research processes?
- “Communication in research projects”: How to include a communications strategy from the very beginning throughout the whole process?
- “Visual communication”: How to make your message more direct by using proper visual tools and details.

4. Target group

All stakeholders in the networks are invited to attend the seminars to promote dialogue on knowledge needs and ways of producing and implementing research based knowledge. The seminar series target researchers, students, and development practitioners, with shifting relevance of the seminars to specific groups of stakeholders.

While most of the seminars and workshops will be carried out in Denmark, the networks will try to make Southern members benefit as well by disseminating all information regarding the seminars through the websites and newsletters – and if possible carrying out sessions in South.

5. Practical details

The seminars and workshops will be announced on a continuous basis, providing more detailed descriptions, including details on contents, links to relevant examples of the tools or approaches in focus, target groups, venues and registration procedures. For questions and/or suggestions you are welcome to contact the Communications Officer at DDRN, Marianne Forti, by email to maf@ddrn.dk or by phone at +45 35 32 25 22.