Enhancing Research Impact in International Development:
A Practical Guide for Practitioners and Researchers

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RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT IMPACT NETWORK

A collaboration between the Australian Council for International Development and Australian universities

ABOUT THE RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT IMPACT NETWORK

The Research for Development Impact Network (RDI Network) is a network of practitioners, researchers and evaluators working in international development with the objective of linking quality research, policy and practice for impact in international development.

The Network began in 2009 as a partnership between Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) member NGOs and Australian universities, when it was co-hosted by ACFID and the Institute of Human Security at La Trobe University. The partnership grew out of a collective desire to widen debate on international development and to strengthen collaboration between academics and members of ACFID. Since then, the Network has continued to grow and promote positive relationships between ACFID members and universities, with the overall goal of supporting collaboration and understanding across actors within the Australian development sector. The Network is supported by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

ABOUT THE HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH INITIATIVE (HADRI)

The Humanitarian and Development Research Initiative (HADRI) was founded at Western Sydney University in 2016 to provide evidence-based approaches to resilience in humanitarian and development practice. HADRI has three main thematic research areas, all of which intersect: Disaster Preparedness, Response and Management; Migration and Diaspora; and Human Security and Sustainable Development. HADRI research promotes innovation, knowledge sharing and translation and informs policy decisions of government, international organisations, academics and other stakeholders.

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Table of Contents

Acronyms

Acronym	Name
ACFID	Australian Council for International Development
ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
ADRAS	Australian Development Research Awards Scheme
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DLP	Development Leadership Program
ERIID	Enhancing Research in Impact in International Development
FERDI	Framework for Exploring Research for Development Impact
HADRI	Humanitarian and Development Research Initiative (Western Sydney University)
HCD	Human-Centred Design
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
LMICs	Lower Middle Income Countries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
RDI Network	Research for Development Impact Network

Glossary of Terms

Capacity Building/Capacity Strengthening: The terms 'capacity-building' or 'capacity strengthening' (with or without the hyphen) are used in development discourse to describe attempts to develop and increase the capabilities of state services or local communities. These terms are used (sometimes interchangeably) in any aspect of international and local development assistance from the security sector, to governance, to environmental programs and community participation. All people have capacity, and the terminology has changed over time from 'building' to 'strengthening' to reflect this sentiment, however the main idea remains one of empowerment of the organisation or community.

Change maker: A person who "desires change in the world and, by gathering knowledge and resources, makes that change happen" (See Upswell 2019). In the development context the term change maker is typically employed with respect to research users who adopt and implement the findings of development research to induce positive change in communities or in social policy.

Co-production: Co-production is an inclusive research approach that acknowledges a plurality of knowledge (See Norström 2020). It requires the full and active involvement of research communities in all aspects of the planning and execution of the research project. Research findings are the product of the labour of many people, so research is 'co-produced' with the collaboration of local researchers and the research community for whom the research occurs. Co-production helps to address power asymmetries by ensuring that local voices and locally defined needs are included (Turnhout et al 2020). The objective of co-production in development research is to ensure that development is not 'done to' people and communities, but is 'done with' them.

Development: Both as a noun and a practice, development is an enormously contested field. The term typically refers to the vast array of social, cultural, political, environmental and economic changes that occur as societies across the world shift from practices more geared towards agricultural production, and towards those more linked to an industrial or service-based economy. At the same time, development can be understood as both a personal or a collective human right ('The Right to Development'). Development affects all societies world-wide as all states are constantly in a state of change. When discussing development research in this guide, the term is used to describe projects on, for example, poverty alleviation, health, agriculture, climate change, food security, inequality, social services, and infrastructure provision.

Knowledge Brokers: The 2006 book *Development Brokers and Translators*: *The Ethnography of Aid and Agencies* (Lewis & Mosse 2006) explored the development context using an anthropological lens. Lewis and Mosse identified that knowledge brokers were far more than just 'go-betweens' between development actors who can "operate and strategize *within* existing relations of development (or between its institutions and society)". Rather, they viewed knowledge brokers as people with local expertise and strong public reputations for excellence who can link different individuals, groups or organisations and help research be adopted and used through their efforts in "generating and translating interests, creating context by tying in interests and so sustaining interpretations" of development projects (2006:13). The **knowledge broker** thus links strongly with **knowledge translation**.

Knowledge Translation: Knowledge brokers are people who are able to help move research outputs to research use, and they are an important aspect of research uptake. Knowledge brokers *translate* knowledge into a local context. Lewis and Mosse (2006: 13) define *translation* as the "mutual enrolment and the interlocking interests that produce project realities" in the development context.

Research beneficiaries: People who benefit from the research without being directly or indirectly involved. Research beneficiaries may not even be the initial research users, partners or stakeholders. Research beneficiaries might include, for example, those who benefit from the development of a vaccine, a new agricultural technique, or some regional economic initiative. The research team may never meet these 'research users', but these people will nonetheless benefit from the research.

Research influencers: In marketing, influencers are people whose adoption and promotion of a product creates value through increased sales and publicity by virtue of their local following, or from being particularly well regarded in their field. Research influencers are not so different. In development research the term refers to those who have influential positions and respect. Adoption of research findings by research influencers can lead to research use and positive change.

Research outcomes: RDI Network (2017a: 7) notes that research "outcomes may occur at various stages along a pathway to impact, using the common terminology of immediate, intermediate and end or final outcomes. The results of applying research findings such as new or changed budget allocations, policies or guidelines might be considered immediate outcomes. The resulting changes to services, products or systems are intermediate outcomes, and the changes resulting from these in the lives of beneficiaries are end or final outcomes." A research project may have a variety of research outcomes.

Research outputs: The *products* of the research that is undertaken. Research *outputs* are materials produced during any stage of the lifecycle of a research project. Research outputs may be produced before data collection, during the field research, as well as in the project completion stage. Research outputs take multiple forms and cover "any direct product of research such as a paper, presentations, toolkits, guidance notes, patents, briefs or technical advice (given verbally or in writing)" (RDI Network 2017a: 7), as well as non-traditional forms including artwork, video or theatre.

Research partners: Individuals or organisations who assist the researchers in the design and implementation of the research project. Research partners may live or operate in the country where the development research is being undertaken. They may also include research collaborations across the world. Research partners would include what are known as 'stakeholders'.

Research uptake: Research uptake involves the interaction of any research end user with the research. This could be through reading a policy brief or attending a seminar (Morton, 2015), but it also covers the adoption and use of the research. The translation of research uptake into research use requires the adoption of research findings, and their adaptation into everyday life through policy change, or a change in practice.

Research use: RDI Network (2017a: 7) defines research use as "an action that is taken on by a stakeholder/end user, such as passing it on to others as useful, adapting it, or using it in a piece of work (by reference to it, etc.)" Essentially research use covers the people or organisations who adopt and use the research outputs. In the context of the monitoring and evaluation ('M&E') of aid programs, the research user could be a government Ministry or organisation that is aiming to assess whether its funded programs are having impact.

Stakeholders: Any person or organisation with a 'stake' (an interest) in the research. Stakeholders may have various interests, including how the research is conducted, what the research aims to find, what the research does in fact find, and what those findings mean for other development projects. 'Stakeholders' is a broad term that includes research funders (such as donors, governments, universities, aid consultancy companies), as well as the communities in which the research takes place.

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Enhancing Research Impact in International Development: A Practical Guide

The aim of this guide:

> *Enhancing Research Impact in International Development* aims to assist Australian-based practitioners and researchers operating in the development sector to maximise the potential **research impact** of a project. It outlines tools and strategies to promote a research project's outputs and outcomes, and to encourage research uptake and research use.
>
> The guide was developed by the Humanitarian and Development Research Initiative (HADRI) at Western Sydney University, in conjunction with a Steering Committee from the Research for Development Impact Network (RDI Network).

The scope of this guide:

> RDI Network's report From Evidence to Impact (2017a) explored the relationship between Australian Development Research Awards Schemes (ADRAS) projects between 2007 and 2016, and their influence on policy and practice. The study followed a rigorous methodology to develop a 'Framework for Exploring Research for Development Impact' (FERDI). It drew on relevant academic and grey literature in a systematic collection and consolidation of ADRAS projects' impacts to derive **five key facilitators of research influence**. These facilitators provide a way to guide practical approaches to improve research uptake and use by researchers and research funders.

This guide uses these five facilitators of research influence to explain the importance of undertaking effective research brokering activities, and effective communication mechanisms to maximise research influence. The five facilitators are:

- Foundational Facilitators
- Planning for Impact
- Engaging End Users
- Influential Outputs
- Lasting Engagement

The **Foundational Facilitators** carry through the entire research project and emphasise having a strong understanding of the context and existing research relationships. **Planning for Impact** and **Engaging End Users** are situated toward the start of the project, and both require thinking about how to achieve impact before commencing the research. Creating the most appropriate **Influential Outputs** depends to an extent on the interactions and information acquired during the research project, while **Lasting Engagement** depends on maintaining collaborations established with project research partners. Lasting Engagement feeds back into the **Foundational Facilitators** of existing relationships, and into **Engaging End Users**.

To enhance research impact, **consider ALL the facilitators together**, throughout the whole of the research process. Your plans may change during a project, so it is important to regularly revisit the question of how to enhance research impact to assess and reassess your strategies during the entire lifecycle of the research project.

Using this Guide

Enhancing Research Impact in International Development explains the five facilitators of research influence and presents a range of relevant tools to assist development sector practitioners and researches to enhance the impact of research.

Each of these facilitators is addressed in its own chapter and includes:

- DISCUSSION OF KEY ISSUES
- TOOLS TO ENHANCE RESEARCH IMPACT
- A CASE STUDY

Three case studies have been summarised from the discussion in From Evidence to Impact (RDI Network 2017a). Two other case studies have been summarised from websites.

While chapters on each of the facilitators can be read alone, each facilitator also links with others at different stages of the research process. Conceptualising or thinking about the research process as a series of feedback loops may help to visualise how all of the facilitators are interrelated.

A Glossary of Terms is at the start of this guide, and at the end of the guide is a list of Further Resources and References.

Who should use this guide?

For those engaged in the development sector, parts of this guide may be more useful than others, depending on your role. Below are suggestions of which parts of the guide may be most useful for different groups:

Donor state officers: Conducting research in development contexts; Foundational Facilitators; Engaging End Users; Lasting Engagement.

First time researchers: Conducting research in development contexts; Foundational Facilitators; Planning for Impact; Engaging End Users.

Locally Engaged Staff: Engaging End Users; Influential Outputs; Lasting Engagement.

Policy Makers: Planning for Impact; Engaging End Users; Influential Outputs.

Return researchers: Influential Outputs.

Defining 'Research Impact'

Research can be understood as inquiry and knowledge-gathering activity that aims to contribute to social, environmental, cultural or political change, especially in policy and practice. The expression 'aims to contribute' is used because even when the basic intention of a project is positive (for example to improve the health, nutrition or access to water of a community), change can still have negative consequences.

This guide is for research that seeks to have a positive impact.

In this practical guide **research impact** means "**the creation of significant and substantial societal or economic value"** (RDI Network 2017a: 7). The term research impact is connected to other terms such as research use, research uptake, co-production, and so on. As many of the terms used in this guide intersect, a Glossary of Terms attempts to explain them in clear language.

When defining research impact, different knowledges and contexts will influence the framing of the concept of research impact. Until recently, much development research operated within a power asymmetry, with funders and aid providers generally designing programs according to their own objectives. In this sense 'research impact' reflected the priorities of those with funds and power. This logic of governance in aid programs is linked to the achievement of specific performance indicators that are important to the donor/s (Carrol and Hameiri 2007; Georgeou and Hawksley 2014: 27-30).

One such priority has been efficiency, where 'efficient' aid programs are a demonstration of money well spent. An effect of measuring 'efficiency' is the reviewing, and the monitoring and evaluation ('M&E') of programs on a regular basis. Such reviews attempt to evaluate which programs have 'impact'. For example, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Network uses an evaluation based on six criteria: relevance; coherence; effectiveness; efficiency; impact; and sustainability. The criterion of impact assesses "holistic and enduring changes in systems or norms, and potential effects on people's well-being, human rights, gender equality, and the environment" (OECD 2020).

Depending on the context, being able to show demonstrable impact may mean the continuation or expansion ('scaling-up') of a program to new districts or countries, while a negative review could spell the end of funding for a program. In this paradigm, the concept of research impact is linked to performance outcomes.

Co-production is an inclusive approach to conducting research. As both a principle and a practice in international development, it represents a fundamental shift in traditional power relations. As a method of conducting research, co-production acknowledges a plurality of knowledge. It requires the active involvement of the research community in all aspects of the research project.

Co-production requires the collaboration of the research community in discussions and decisions over project design, conduct, decision-making and resources. It requires sharing power, funding and control with research participants and other stakeholders. In a situation of co-production there are multiple interested parties, so research impact will be informed by various knowledges and perspectives. Research impact may thus look rather different to neoliberal metrics such as efficiency, depending on what people value.

Within this document you will see a few icons to help you navigate different content areas:

recognise the 'gems' and value-add to research knowledge brokering

look out for and pay attention to these topics to get the best out of your research influence

Beware; may be negative impacts, occurring alongside positive impacts

take practical actions / steps to get the best out of your research influence

ask questions to make decisions for more effective research impact

establish a milestone in planning for research impact

While this guide addresses issues encountered when conducting research in development contexts, it is **not** meant to be a guide to 'doing development research' in general, nor is it a guide to ethical research practices. There are several existing sources on conducting ethical research in the development context, including:

- ACFID's Good Practice Toolkit (ACFID 2019a) for development activities.
- Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) guide Principles and Practices of Ethical Community Engagement (CSIRO 2019a).
- Department for International Development (UK). DFID Ethical Guidance for Research Evaluation and Monitoring Activities (DFID 2020).
- RDI Network's website for Effective and Ethical Research and Evaluation, with principles, case studies, an ethical practice starter kit and a training module (RDI Network 2019b).

Planning for Research Impact

Planning to have research impact involves understanding what you want to achieve from the research you are about to undertake and putting in place strategies to try to make that happen.

Enhancing Research Impact in International Development: a practical guide involves one simple idea:

Think about having research impact before, during, and after researching

The research might be used by government, but it could also be used by communities with limited access to resources. Being adaptable in your thinking about how to 'co-produce' research outputs may lead to the adoption of research outputs by research users.

Working in a development context might require some imagination when planning for impact. The eminent UK research impact scholar Professor Mark Reed has identified ten different types of impact, and notes that the objective of research impact is to provide benefit to others.

Reed (2018a: 33-96) suggests five principles for "fast tracking" research impact: design; represent; engage; early impacts; reflect and sustain. He suggests that when planning for impact, having an early impact can be pivotal in publicising the intentions of the research and building good will.

In this report, much of the impact literature cited is Western-centric, therefore it is important to reflect carefully on the intersections of academic research, imperialism and cultural colonisation. In particular, consider that research does not exist as a singular truth, but as a plurality of knowledge, and that what is defined as impact for a researcher may not be meaningful, positive impact for marginalised and vulnerable people. Some work is however being done on decolonising the research process and perceptions of 'impact' so that a series of empowering and decolonised methodologies can be used throughout the field of research in the development context (Smith 2018).

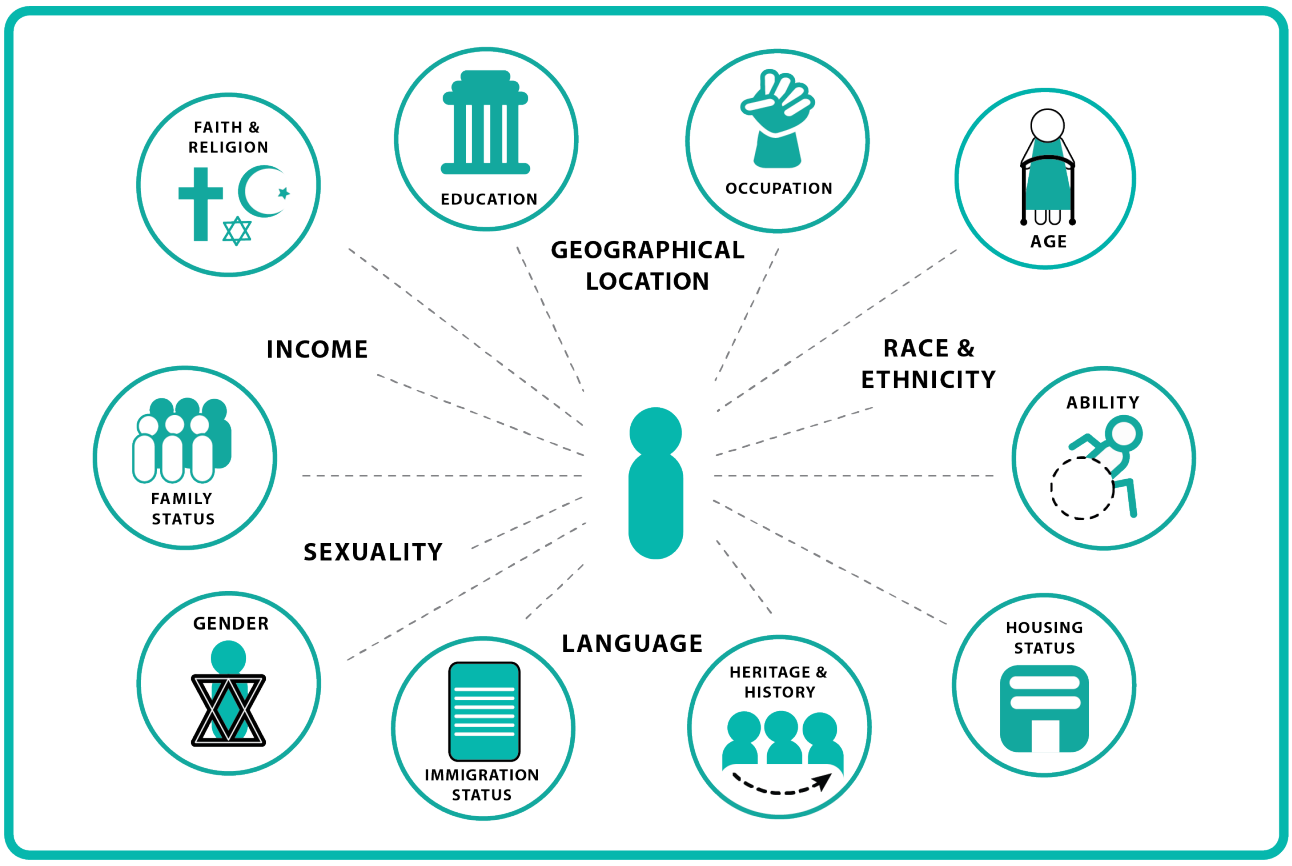
Conducting research in development contexts

The development context is a dynamic space with multiple local and international actors. Power is exercised at multiple levels and by numerous individuals involved in decision making. Not all of these people are involved in formal political structures. Power is produced, reproduced and changing every day, through various interactions in society. DFAT's Effective Governance Strategy (DFAT 2015a) provides a succinct guide to how issues of power intersect with aid priorities such as governance.

Researchers often collaborate with governments, organisations and communities in the development context, and some of the funding may be shared with local partners, however control of most of the resources tends to remain with the funders. Issues of power, money, race and privilege mean that these relationships are asymmetrical.

How such issues are perceived is largely dependent on your position in relation to the research, and to the structures of power and resources that support the research project. In social sciences your relationship to these processes of power and finance are known as your '**positionality**'.

Figure 1: Positionality

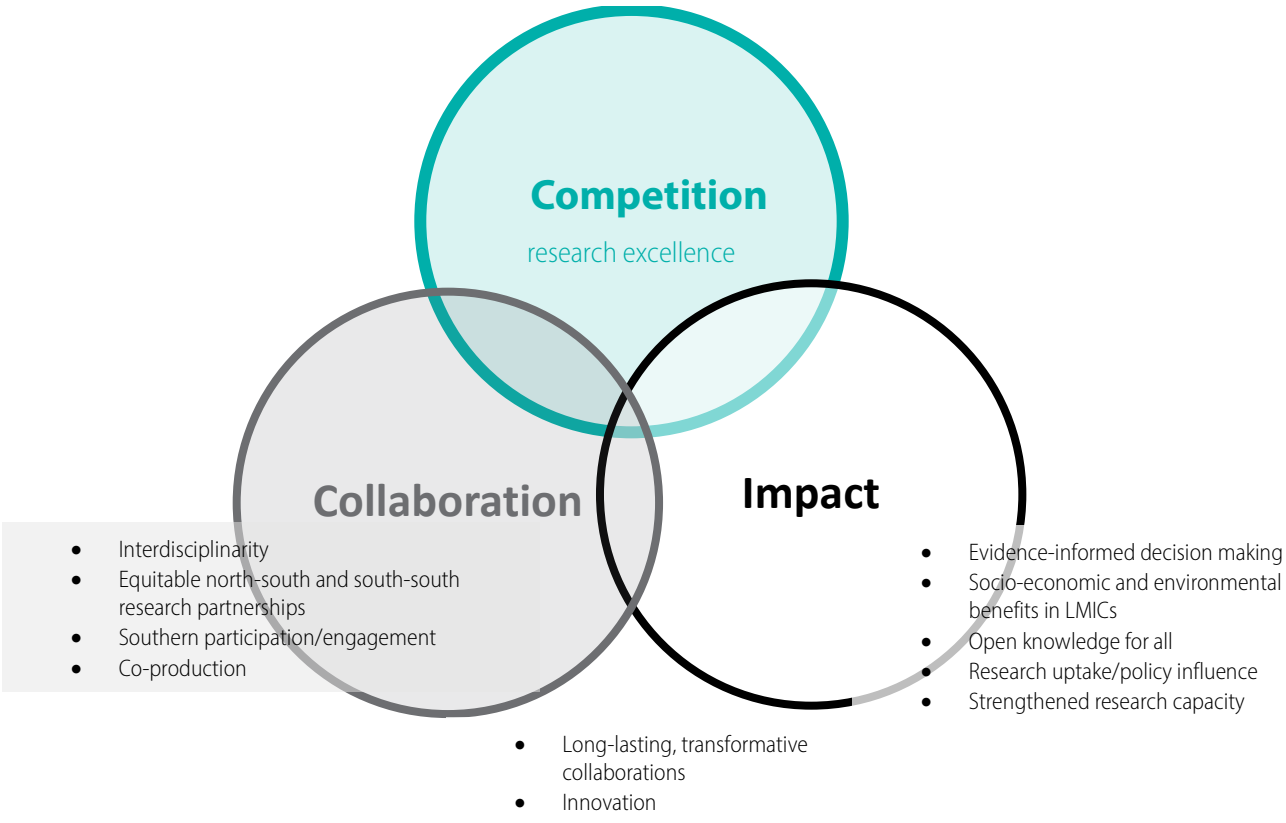


An understanding of positionality is crucial when working in development contexts. The RDI Network encourages all development practitioners and researchers to adopt ethical research practices and principles when working in-country and with minority groups, so as to engage in partnerships that build local capacity and lead to long-term collaboration.

RDI Network's 2017 *Principles and Guidelines for ethical research and evaluation in development* can assist when working with communities (RDI Network 2017b), along with RDI Network's *How to Partner for Development Research* (2017c). Another RDI Network guide *How to Collaborate with Pacific Churches for development research* provides advice on working with religious institutions in the Pacific Islands region (RDI Network 2018).

The figure below is adapted from the UK Collaborative on Development Science publication Striking the Balance, which focuses on strategies and activities to promote research collaboration, including stages funding, online partnership brokering service and seed funding (UK CDS 2017: 6). The figure illustrates how collaboration enables co-production and leads to research impact.

Figure 2: The intersection of competition, collaboration and impact in research



Source: Adapted from UK Collaborative on Development Science, *Striking the Balance*, (UK CDS 2017: 6).

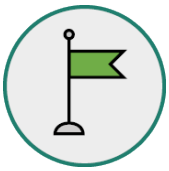
Co-production in Research

Whether you have never worked in a development context, or if have been working in international development for a long time, it is useful to review existing guides to see what constitutes 'best practice' in development research.

This practical guide draws heavily on concepts of co-production and research partnerships to suggest strategies that can help your research have clear research impacts. While there are many existing research partnerships, for example between NGOs and universities (ACFID University Network 2015), engaging in co-production enables research partnerships that involve research users in the research project design, operation and project management.

Co-operative planning integrates all relevant stakeholders. It fosters shared and equal decision making and research processes by creating a systematic project design. Such a strategy engages a range of stakeholders, research beneficiaries and research influencers throughout the various stages of the research project, including after the research project has ended.

It is especially important to identify any conflict-exacerbating impacts of your project, and how your research can affect inter- and intra-group relations. The principle of Do No Harm (DNH) is used by many aid organisations to improve their conflict sensitivity. Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC 2014) provides examples of how aid interventions have fuelled conflict, plus useful content on understanding and managing conflict sensitivity.

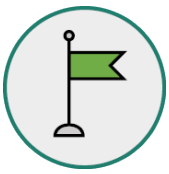


Before

At the commencement of any discussion about research impact in international development, talk with local partners and key stakeholders about how to best integrate strategies for stakeholder mapping, research impact, and communication and output (RDI Network 2019a). In development contexts, achieving research impact may require considering many initial questions, including:

- HAS THE RESEARCH PROJECT BEEN COMMISSIONED OR DESIGNED WITH RESEARCH USERS, IN PARTICULAR THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY?
- WHO WILL USE THE RESEARCH?
- HOW WILL THEY USE THE RESEARCH?
- HOW WILL THE RESEARCH TEAM ENGAGE RESEARCH USERS, AND AT WHAT POINT IN THE PROJECT?
- WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENGAGING THE RESEARCH USERS?
- HOW WILL THE RESEARCH TEAM KNOW THE RESEARCH HAS BEEN USED, AND BY WHOM?
- HAVE RESOURCES BEEN ALLOCATED (FOR EXAMPLE PEOPLE, TIME OR MONEY) TO BUILDING OR MANAGING RESEARCH IMPACT?
- WHICH PLATFORMS AND MECHANISMS WILL BE USED TO BUILD AND MANAGE RESEARCH IMPACT?
- WHAT ARE THE MAIN RISKS TO HAVING RESEARCH IMPACT?
- HOW CAN THOSE RISKS BE REDUCED?
- HAVE APPROPRIATE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES BEEN ESTABLISHED?
- HOW WILL THE RESEARCH TEAM INTEGRATE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FEEDBACK ON THE PROJECT PROPOSAL?
- HOW WILL THE RESEARCH FINDINGS BE COMMUNICATED BACK TO LOCAL PARTNERS, KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND USERS?

During
Once the project has commenced, revise, and if necessary, adjust, existing strategies, or incorporate new strategies so as to enhance research impact.



After
When the research is completed, consider how you will acknowledge and maintain contact with research stakeholders. Will the strategies you initially selected to maximise research impact still work, or will you need to create new strategies? If there are more effective ways to ensure research adoption and uptake, revise your research impact strategies.

Research evaluators suggest a minimum period of two years after the completion of a project before attempting an evaluation of research impacts. To properly assess research impact may take even longer; RDI Network's 2017 study *From Evidence to Impact* (2017a) mainly looked at research projects from 2007, 2008, and 2009, as well as a few from 2012.

Potential Problems with Research Impact

It should be acknowledged that in early stages along a pathway to impact, both the research project itself and research outputs can frequently have little to no influence. Whilst some research projects may have an immediate influence on decisions, even during the course of the research process, other research work that tackles contentious or complex challenges may require a much longer processes of translation to bring about change. As a result, any evidence of research impact may not occur until years later. The later use of research, and any outcomes occurring due to the research, can however still be seen as a positive result, and can demonstrate the value of the research.

Again, it is important to consider your positionality on 'research impact'. Impact may have different connotations to the range of stakeholders involved in research, from the researcher to research beneficiaries and research partners. Impact that may be measurable and quantifiable may not be considered beneficial to many individuals and communities (Escobar 2018). Beware of research that is extractive in nature, or that which disregards indigenous knowledge.

International development research can be also be affected by unexpected changes in organisation (and government) funding such as budget cuts, causing problems for existing or future research projects. Few such issues are possible to predict, and most are well beyond the control of the research team. Even if all goes to plan, not all research turns out as initially intended. This can be because the research team, did, or did not, do or perform some action, but it may also be due to how other people behave.

Grimpact

The term 'Grimpact' (a combination of 'grim' + 'impact') refers to the possible negative consequences of conducting research. Many things can go wrong during international development research however Grimpact is not related to problems experienced during fieldwork. As Derrick and Benneworth (2019) argue, the concept of 'Grimpact' has emerged due to the rush to show that research 'works', and it refers to what happens if your research is adopted in ways you had not anticipated.

Before you start your research, it is worth considering the 'worst case scenario' in how the research you are conducting could possibly be misused. For example, your research on water storage leads to a local community being evicted to make room for a dam. In this case there might be a 'national' (i.e. state) benefit from your research, but it might not be inclusive, as the research has likely not had a 'positive' impact for those dispossessed of their lands.

Researchers cannot always anticipate what might happen if their research is adopted and misused, but it will help to have a clear stakeholder map (Reed 2019a) of who you wish to adopt your research, and a research impact plan that shows a pathway to research uptake.

Trolling

Once the research findings are released online there is little you can do to manage how they are used by others. Researchers are not responsible for how media and individuals use or misuse research, however researchers can be thoughtful and strategic in presenting findings, which can help to minimise the downside of media exposure.

This is particularly the case with social media, which is instant and usually unfiltered. While social media posts are useful to publicise your research, some topics (i.e. climate change; gender-based violence) can attract negative attention from online 'internet trolls'—defined by the Cambridge English dictionary (Cambridge 2020) as people who leave an "insulting or offensive message on the internet in order to upset someone or to get attention or cause trouble".

Trolls tend to post inflammatory, controversial and often personally offensive comments in order to disrupt the conversation or side-track a discussion. Such people ('trolls') may not only disagree with what you say, but can also target you personally, which can be an unpleasant and upsetting experience.

Trolling is a significant issue for researchers because it may result in negative, and unfair, feedback, thus affecting research impact.

While there is no fool-proof way to prevent 'trolling', Hootsuite (2019) has some strategies to reduce the prospect of online social media trolls, including creating some separation between your public and private life, changing the settings on your social media accounts, or having the media address for contact on a social media post divert to a different email account monitored by another person. Search Engine Journal (2019) also has some ideas, including having a blog comment policy and appointing a moderator.

The rest of this guide presents each of the five facilitators and discuss how each facilitator can contribute to maximising your research impact.

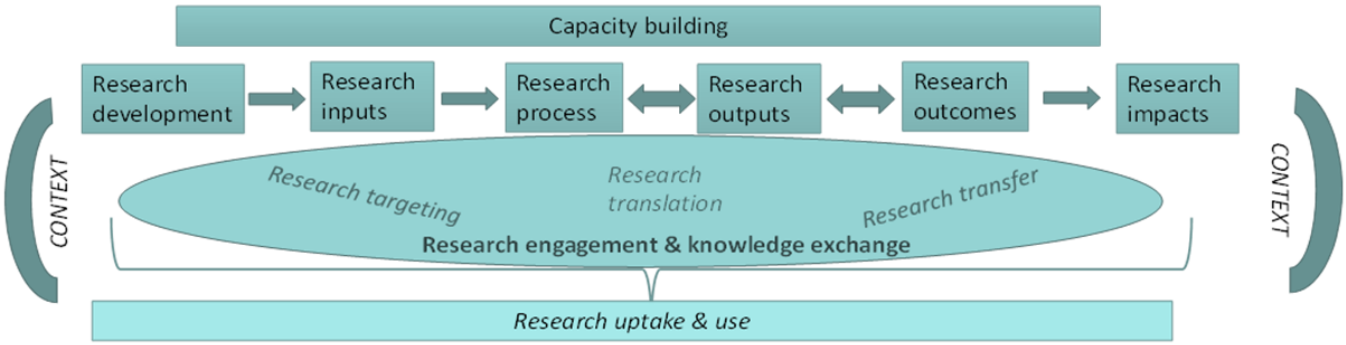
The Framework for Exploring Research for Development Impact

From Evidence to Impact (RDI Network 2017a) sought to provide insight on how to maximise development outcomes arising from research in the sector. It discussed issues associated with the research process, including capacity building/capacity strengthening, research engagement and knowledge exchange, and research uptake and use.

The framework developed after the systematic collection, consolidation and analysis of project impacts, and is shown in Figure 3 below. It presents the research process and aspects of the pathway to impact, as well as key categories of contribution. On both sides of this diagram is 'context', which indicates every situation is different. This is particularly so in the development context where different peoples and areas have different languages, levels of education, services, engagement with the wider world and historical experiences.

In the diagram below, research development leads to research impact, but there are intersections and interactions with research inputs, research process and research outcomes. Research uptake and use, which are an important aspect of research impact, rely on research targeting, research translation and research transfer, or what is viewed as "research engagement and knowledge exchange". Capacity building influences the research process and the ability of different actors to use and translate research findings. It is also in and of itself a desirable outcome of development research. Capacity building is thus included in the framework as spanning the whole research process, based on its importance in research planning. The breadth of different categories of development contribution relate to their influence on capacity building, product development, policy, practice and systems, and wider economic and societal changes.

Figure 3: From Evidence to Impact diagram on the research process



Capacity building	Product development	Policy	Practice / systems / sector	Economic / societal
The development of attributes, skills and systems that increase quality and quantity of research conduct, uptake and use.	Contribution to new or improved products or technologies. May be through improvements to enabling environment, direct development, testing or scaling.	Contribution to new or changed policy narratives or content locally, nationally, regionally or globally.	Contribution to changes in ways of doing things on the ground and / or the beliefs or systems that govern them.	Changes in wider social / economic benefits such as job creation economic growth, improved equity, social capital.

Source: From Evidence to Impact (RDI Network 2017a: 6).

A range of factors will affect research uptake and use. These include: the type and demand for research undertaken; the clarity of the impact goal; specificity in definition of target audience/end users' clarity in engagement plans; and structuring inputs to promote influence (RDI Network 2017a: 31-32).

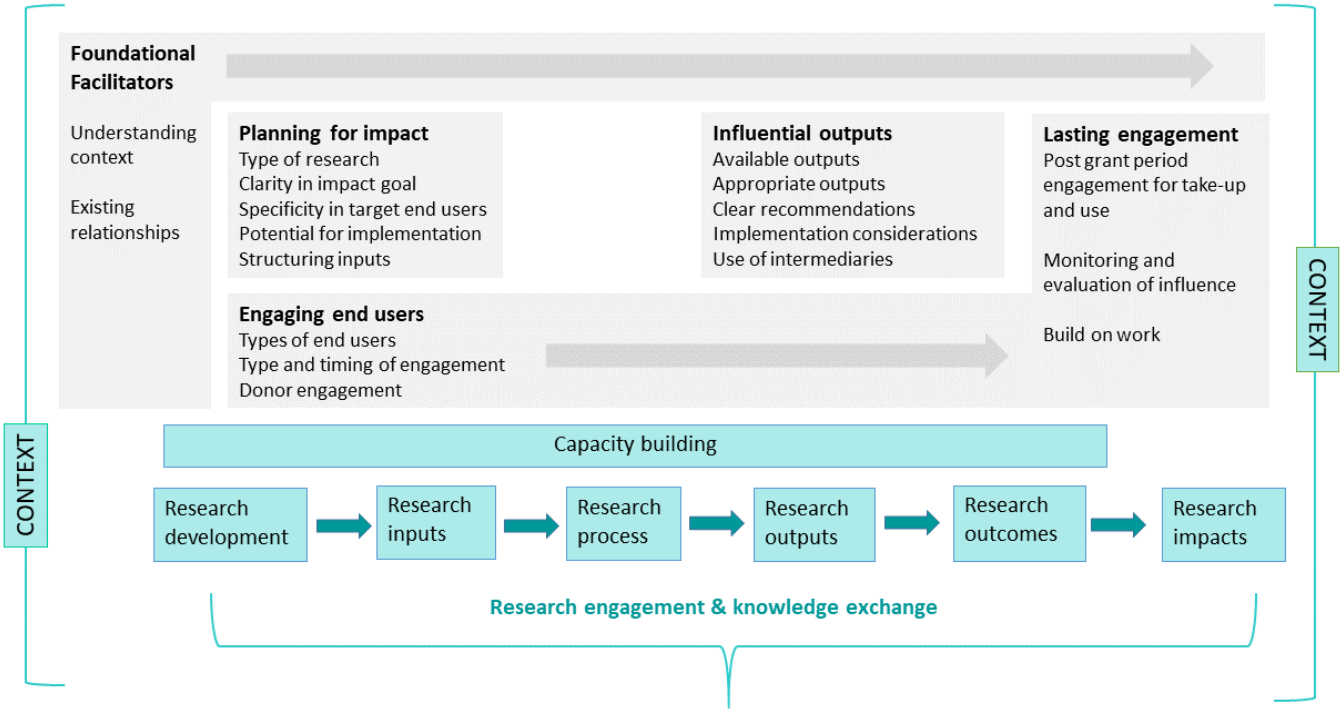
As a study of the Australian Development Research Awards Schemes 2007-2016, the authors of *From Evidence to Impact* found that research that set out to provide a solution to a pressing problem or known demand of an end user ("**responsive research**") had clearer links to demonstrable research uptake and impact than research that sought new information ("**exploratory research**") about a community or problem (RDI Network 2017a: 31). Exploratory research may eventually have research impact, but not always in a direct path.

Research that makes a direct contribution to a policy need is more likely to result in outcomes. This is because those seeking the research are already looking to effect change. Such research articulates with a policy change process that is already in progress, however there may still be a gap between policy translation, adoption and a change in practice.

Uptake of research is slower or does not happen when stakeholders lack interest in the research, where the research findings are predictable, where there is no clear benefit to end users, where there is insufficient information on possible costs of scaling up the recommended policy initiative, or where the research findings simply replicate other data already held by stakeholders (RDI 2017a: 32). It is also possible in some situations that political interests do not support the intentions of the research, findings of the research or the concentration of the research on particular groups of people, all of which will affect research adoption and uptake.

From Evidence to Impact identified five key facilitators of research influence. Each of the five facilitators identifies practical steps to enhance the impact of your research. The figure below (RDI Network 2017a: 26) illustrates the five types of facilitators of research impact and their relative foci at different stages of the research process.

Figure 4: Mapping the five facilitators for enhancing research impact



Source: From Evidence to Impact (RDI Network 2017a: 26)

1. Foundational Facilitators: familiarity and prior engagement with research context and users

The key to enhancing your research impact in international development relates to your knowledge of the research context, the possible research users, and having existing research partnerships.

This section examines the first facilitator—Foundational Facilitators—and includes discussion of key points, tools for enhancing research impact in international development, and a case study.

Discussion and Key Issues

The term '**Foundational Facilitators'** refers to the local political, policy and socio-cultural issues that inform the facilitation and conduct of any development research. To put the issue another way, you may think your research is ground-breaking, but unless you understand which stakeholders influence policy adoption, which people can be influential in adopting research, and the best way to approach them, your research is less likely to have impact.

Below is a summary of some issues that affect the development context:

a) Political factors are enormously important in different development contexts, as there may be a multitude of development actors, including aid donors, working alongside the state and its agencies. In some development contexts there may be conflict, the society may be engaged in post-conflict reconstruction, or there may be no effective government presence. In other situations, there may be strong political parties that monopolise control over resources, as well as control over entry and exit of foreign researchers. Aside from whatever official permits may be required to conduct research, knowing the political history of a country is crucial both for understanding the politics of the research environment, and to avoid aligning your research closely with any faction that may lead to the exclusion of the research and the dismissal of its impact.

Dealing with aid donors brings its own challenges for researchers unfamiliar with how government bureaucracies function. Working with funding bodies within government involves understanding how hierarchies work, as well as the specific institutional cultures of agencies, their histories and the matters that affect their decision making. Specific challenges include academic independence with commissioned work, when to escalate or share information with government funding agencies, managing reputational risk, how the timing of information sharing affects policy impact and uptake, and tailoring academic language and research outputs for consumption by government.

In the specific development context Developmental Leadership Program's Everyday Political Analysis (DLP 2016) provides useful questions to assist researchers to start to engage with the main political decision makers.

b) Policy factors refers to the ways in which aspects of public policy, including new research, are assessed and discussed within different levels of government. Depending on the context, the national state may be the lead agency with policy development, but in more decentralised states provincial, district or local authorities might be the key policy decision makers. Policy factors include advocacy for or against policy change from interest groups, lobby groups, advocacy, non-government organisations (NGOs), international agencies, private companies, other state Ministries and interested individuals. Again, understanding the main influences on government can help you to target your research output towards particular policy advocates.

Aid donors are particularly concerned with gender, disability and indigenous peoples, and seek to include these groups in all development research. When working with indigenous peoples it is crucial to be informed about and observe the highest ethical standards and latest protocols, both in Australia (NHMRC 2018), and in other development contexts (UNDESA 2009), however there is no substitute for local knowledge brokers and translators with local language capacity and cultural understanding.

The Disability Inclusive Development website (DID4all 2020) has numerous resources for disability and development research, including their page on data collection to inform design and measurement featuring articles and presentations. DLP's Gender and Politics in Practice (DLP 2020) is also essential reading to understand how adopting a gendered lens can lead to more effective development work.

DFAT (2105b) has research notes on how disability inclusion articulates with development outcomes, and there are numerous organisations that focus on the importance of gender equality in development, not least the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD 2020), and Goal 5 (Gender Equality) of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG 2020).

c) Socio-cultural factors refers to a wide range of specific linguistic and behavioural features of human groups and civilisations. While culture is an ever-changing aspect of human societies, as nation-states have emerged specific features are regarded as part of a 'national' character. The formulation of (usually unwritten) rules around acceptable behaviour, conduct and social mores are part of the life of a cultural group, so knowledge of social-cultural factors is important to conducting research.

Research collaborators—a broad term encompassing research partners, knowledge brokers and translators, and in country research managers—can guide the research by helping to devise appropriate methods of data collection. This is especially important in societies where gender divisions are strictly enforced.

From Evidence to Impact (RDI Network 2017a: 29) highlighted several ways in which research teams achieved contextual understanding including:

- prior work in the same country and context
- initial formative in-country research work to gain an understanding of current policies, actors and/or processes relevant to the research area
- engaging a stakeholder representative advisory group early in the project
- relationships of mutual respect and trust with key senior officials who directly inform the research team of opportunities, risks and changes in these relationships during the research period, and
- a reputable and well networked in-country partner as an integral member of the research team

Existing research partnerships built on sustained engagement within a development context are the ideal way to ensure not only that the research is contextual and can have impact, but that the research is not extractive in nature (ODI 2019). The presence of existing relationships of trust and mutual respect between senior research team members and key stakeholders is foundational to research impact. Such relationships will typically stem from sustained engagement with a local research team that can collaborate on the research design and with data collection. *From Evidence to Impact* noted one research project team that had a 30-year research partnership in Indonesia. This team found that this longer-term collaborative work, rather than short-term projects, was essential to address contentious issues (2017a: 28). Maintaining contact with local research networks over time is not always easy, especially in very remote areas where communication is difficult. Efforts can include ensuring an ongoing presence in-country, establishing secondments between countries and organisations, ongoing advisory committees of key stakeholders, and ensuring regular face-to-face contact. The rise of mobile internet devices and mobile phone applications makes keeping in touch easier, but a time investment is required on both sides to keep the connection open.

Prior engagement with the research context and users can lead to faster uptake of the findings of a new research project, if there is a record of good will and partnership. Building on existing relationships can thus help to enhance a project's research impact, as well as user receptiveness to research evidence.

Forming new partnerships in a development context may initially require an investment of time and the reaching out through networks or professional local researchers to connect you to a local community or specific area. Typically permission should be asked of people before entering communities, and there may be local customs to observe. Local researchers will understand the socio-cultural and political context, and they will typically speak the local language, or arrange for translators.

RDI Network mapping from 2017 (RDI Network 2017d) presents information on conducting research in Australia's region. It provides a starting point for identifying potential in-country research partners and collaborators. The mapping exercise identified existing institutional and organisational research capacity in six countries within Asia, and 15 countries in the Pacific. These include universities, think tanks, research organisations and regional development organisations.

If you are new to the development research space, RDI Network also has existing guides on how to partner for development research, including collaborating with Pacific Churches (RDI Network 2017c; 2018), and a forthcoming guide, produced in collaboration with CBM and the Nossal Institute for Global Health, on disability-inclusive research methods.

Engaged research is a *relational process* that occurs primarily at the **local level**. This applies whether you are initiating research for the first time in a country you have never visited, or if you are a veteran researcher with strong networks. Either way, you need to build, and maintain, good relations and trust with a range of local partners.

Other foundational considerations that should be respected includes the **reputation of the researchers** in the research area, or in an existing related research field. As development is an interdisciplinary field, your expertise, and that of your research partners, may be broadly applicable to other contexts, but it helps if the researcher has a strong track record and reputation for working ethically and well with local people, organisations and governments.

Tools and Techniques to Enhance Research Impact

What local stakeholders want is critical to the uptake of research. Are they interested in, or are they wary of, the implementation of an effective development intervention? How do they think the research might fit (or might not fit) into the bigger regional or national development picture?

Research impact planning (Reed 2019b) helps to set impact goals and is a first step in planning for research impact, but knowing what the local stakeholders want is vital for research uptake. Local partners are key, as they will be more likely to know the stakeholders relevant to the research. If you do not have a local research partner, then **stakeholder mapping** (the identification and listing of any party with an interest in the research), and **stakeholder analysis** (an assessment of the relative power, influence and interests of the different stakeholders) can help you establish with whom it may be best to communicate to forge collaborations and partnerships. Even if you have local partners stakeholder mapping and analysis is still a useful exercise.

Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis tools help researchers mitigate risks. They allow you to identify levels of stakeholder interest in (or opposition to) the research, and to inform communication strategies. Mark Reed (2018a: 156) has developed a Stakeholder and Public Analysis Template (2019a) that can be used to chart your relationships and the likely interest of different stakeholders in the research. Reed (2018a: 33-96) explains how to identify groups that are or could be interested, their level of interest, which parts of the research might interest them, and their level of influence on developing the research.

Figure 5: Mark Reed's template for stakeholder and public analysis

Stakeholder and Public Analysis Template

Name of organization, group or segment of the public	Likely interest in your research H/M/L	What aspects of your research are they likely to be interested in (or why are they likely not interested)?	What level of influence might they have on your capacity to generate impact (to facilitate or block) and/or what levelof impact (positive or negative) might they derive from the research? H/M/L	Comments on level of influence (to facilitate or block impact) and/or likely impact (positive or negative) e.g. times or contexts in which they have more/less influence over the outcomes of your research, ways they might block or facilitate your research or impact, types of benefit they might derive from the research

Source: Mark Reed (reproduced with permission)

Another example of stakeholder analysis comes from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI n.d), which has a webpage on Stakeholder Analysis mapping, grouping stakeholders into three categories: private, public and civil society.

Figure 6: ODI's Stakeholder Analysis

Private Sector Stakeholders	Public Sector Stakeholders	Civil Society Stakeholder
Corporations and businesses Business associations Professional bodies Individual business leader Financial Institutions	Ministers and advisors (executive) Civil servants and departments (bureaucracy) Elected representatives (Legislature Courts (Judiciary) Political parties Local governments/councils Military Quangos and commissions International bodies (World Bank, UN)	Media Churches/Religion Schools and Universities Social movements and advocacy groups Trade unions National NGOs International NGOs

Source: Overseas Development Institute (ODI n.d.).

Some questions to get you started for your stakeholder mapping and analysis are:

- Who will be your in-country research partners? With whom will you collaborate? Who will you need to keep informed during the process (community groups, NGOs, government)?
- What is their likely interest in the research?
- Can the research build the capacities of research partners to engage in and feel comfortable with the complexity inherent in social partnerships, and with the multiple and dynamic relationships that develop between research stakeholders?
- Are your research partners the same or different to your research stakeholders (research beneficiaries, research influencers, direct research users)?
- Which of these stakeholders will shape the research process (positively and negatively) and at what stage of the research process?
- When will you engage these different stakeholders, and how?
- Can you engage research users in shared action with early (and easy) research achievements?
- What will be the best format for research outputs for each stakeholder group?

There are also a number of different **contextual analysis tools** that can assist in understanding the historical, political, economic, social and development context of the country in which you plan to conduct research. Although most often used in a humanitarian setting, these tools can be applied to research in a development context to understand both the country context and potential partnerships. These include a political economy analysis, power analysis, social network analysis, etc. You can see more information on these in Andrew Meaux and Wale Osofisan (2016) *A Review of Context Analysis Tools for Urban Humanitarian Response*, or the UNDP's (2012) *Institutional and Context Analysis Guidance Note*.

As the case study below shows, research users will re-engage with researchers when previous collaborations have worked well, delivered social change, and are valued by end users.

Case Study: Extending Health Coverage in Cambodia and Laos

A Summary of *From Evidence to Impact* (RDI Network 2017a: 52-56)

Key issues: reputation; existing research partnerships, responsive research, context

Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) had different systems for financing health initiatives at the sub national (i.e. province or district) level. In Cambodia, NGOs were managing Health Equity Funds (HEF) that treated poor people for no cost at the point of service, however other donors operated and supported contribution-based community-based health insurance (CBHI) schemes. In Lao PDR the government ran a CBHI, but it could not cover the costs. By the late 2000s funding from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) had led to a larger number of NGO-operated HEFs in Lao PDR. By that time both countries had two systems for providing health financing, and both wanted to know which system was more effective.

The Principal Investigator (PI), for the project *Extending Health Coverage in Cambodia and Laos* had a strong relevant research track record, developed over 15 years in both countries. This involved inputs to a strategic health financing framework with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Cambodia's Ministry of Health.

The PI had a reputation and existing research partnerships, and he had continued to conduct research in both country contexts. He also had field research experience that provided knowledge of local contexts, and successful prior collaborations with research users. He had therefore built trust, through sustained in-country experience, and a demonstrated commitment to addressing health inequality.

This responsive research led to research uptake, in this case a policy decision by the governments of Cambodia and Laos to adopt a wider roll out of HEF in preference to CBHI for health care coverage of poorer households (RDI Network 2017a: 28).

The foundational facilitator of familiarity and prior engagement with the research context and users informed the project's research design, implementation, and the adoption of its findings and recommendations.

2. Planning for Impact: Intentional focus on impact and integrated methods for its achievement

The second facilitator **Planning for Impact** refers to having a plan to enable the dissemination, adoption and uptake of research outcomes.

Discussion and Key Issues

Research impact is difficult to measure for development researchers as a change in policy or practice generally does not result from one specific cause, or there may be multiple explanations for why things change (Reed 2018a: 293; 2019b). If research often influences change rather than causing it, the influence of research may need to be thought of in terms of contribution rather than attribution.

Despite this complexity, planning for impact can help to identify potential risks to research adoption and focus the research team on appropriate outputs. The reputation(s) of the researchers, the research team and the funding organisation can affect research uptake and impact, as can the relationships they have with locally engaged staff, the policy community in the development context, and international and local NGOs.

There are also risks in not considering the needs and expectations of people who you may see as 'beneficiaries' of your research. Failure to consult widely may result in devising inappropriate outcomes that are unsuitable for the development context.

When starting a research project, it is important to consider some different strategies and methods for achieving the intended research goals. You might call this 'starting with the end in mind', which refers to "having a clear idea of what practical changes the research is setting out to result in, how these changes might occur, and which stakeholders are most central to influencing these proposed changes" (RDI Network 2017a: 24). If your development research is commissioned by an international organisation or government, this question might be easy to answer. If not, then identifying who will be interested will require undertaking a stakeholder analysis to inform the design of research impact strategies for the project. Assuming that you know why the research is being undertaken, you also need to develop a very clear idea of exactly what you want to achieve from the research and who you want the research to influence.

Your research team might discuss issues such as:

- DEVELOPING AN IMPACT PATHWAY MAP
- IDENTIFYING YOUR THEORY OF CHANGE
- THE TYPES OF RESEARCH OUTPUTS REQUIRED TO HAVE RESEARCH IMPACT
- HOW TO DISSEMINATE YOUR RESEARCH FINDINGS

Some key questions might be:

Why are you doing the research? Responsive research is likely to be relevant and to have more impact in a development context. Where research projects are responding to a known demand from a stakeholder, relate to a known problem of the community, or when they respond to a contentious and pressing policy question, contributions to outcomes and impact will be much clearer. A clear articulation and understanding of the practical challenges and problems that have led to the research, and to which the research aims to contribute, directly relates to the increased likelihood of research uptake and research impact. If the relevance of the research is not understood, then the intended end users are unlikely to engage with the research.

Think about what changes in policy or practice the research aims to induce, as well as the likelihood that the results of the research can actually result in changes to how end users think and behave, or the programs or policies of government. If the likely recommendations of the research are difficult or overly costly to implement, it may not be realistic, and you may need to instead consider 'best case' scenarios.

Have potential audiences for the research findings been defined, and have their information needs been identified and understood? Planning for Impact includes being clear on the distinction between 'target audiences' and 'dissemination groups'. The more specific you can be from the outset about who you plan to influence, and how you plan to do that, the more likely it is that you will be able to communicate effectively and that there will be research uptake.

The target audience might be key defined groups such as local government or individuals who can exert the most influence at the policy or governmental level to bring about the changes intended from the research. They may even be actively engaged in the research. The target audience is different to dissemination groups, for example the local community at large. These are broader groups who are relevant to the research, and who may benefit from it. The results and findings of the research should be communicated to dissemination groups, especially if they are affected by the research, but such groups are not necessarily the key potential drivers of policy change.

Stakeholder mapping and analysis involves identifying which stakeholders will be interested in the research and is beneficial to defining your audience. Holding joint discussions with local government, NGOs and communities before you commence research will help to understand any concerns about the intended research, and gives time for the research team to address any concerns raised. Stakeholder mapping and analysis can inform your plan of how to communicate with or involve stakeholders during the research process. Ideally your research partner would be both engaged in the research and be the target audience, meaning that the relevance and the commitment to achieving impact will be much stronger through co-production.

How will you report your findings to target specific intended audiences and research beneficiaries / end users? Planning for Impact involves creating research outputs for specific audiences, usually a number of different outputs. For example, your research population might also be end users of the research, the people who have shared their stories and experiences with you. This community might need a different form of output (e.g. a village meeting) to a government department (e.g. a full report with a budget), and this may need to be planned, budgeted for, and scheduled in advance.

Tools and Techniques to Enhance Research Impact

Project mapping helps to plot the intended research goals, outcomes and impacts over the life of the research project. Project mapping enables the clear articulation of research goals, and the methods to achieve those goals, as well as the most time- and cost-effective ways of achieving impact. Project mapping tools (see Venngage 2019a) are included in many computer software packages. Some tools are geared towards business applications, and others towards social networking. Some developers offer discounted prices for not-for-profits.

Mind Maps are a visual tool for initial project mapping that help to tease out ideas, connections and issues. There are numerous sites for software mind maps, including these from Learning Fundamentals (2019). They can be utilised as a helpful stage in project mapping. Other mind maps are available from software developers such as Venngage (2019b).

Research Impact Planning Template: Completing a Research Impact Planning Template (Reed 2019c) along with your project mapping can assist with early engagement on enhancing research impact. Planning from the start of the project can help to clarify exactly who you need to influence, why, and how you could try to do so. Mark Reed's *Research Impact Handbook* (2018a) and Fast Track Impact website (2019d) have links to a variety of free tools, including a Pathway to Impact Builder, a Social Media Strategy Template, and a Planning Template, (presented in Figure 7 below).

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www.rdinetwork.org.au

Figure 7: Mark Reed's *Fast Track Impact* Planning Template:

Fast Track Impact Planning Template

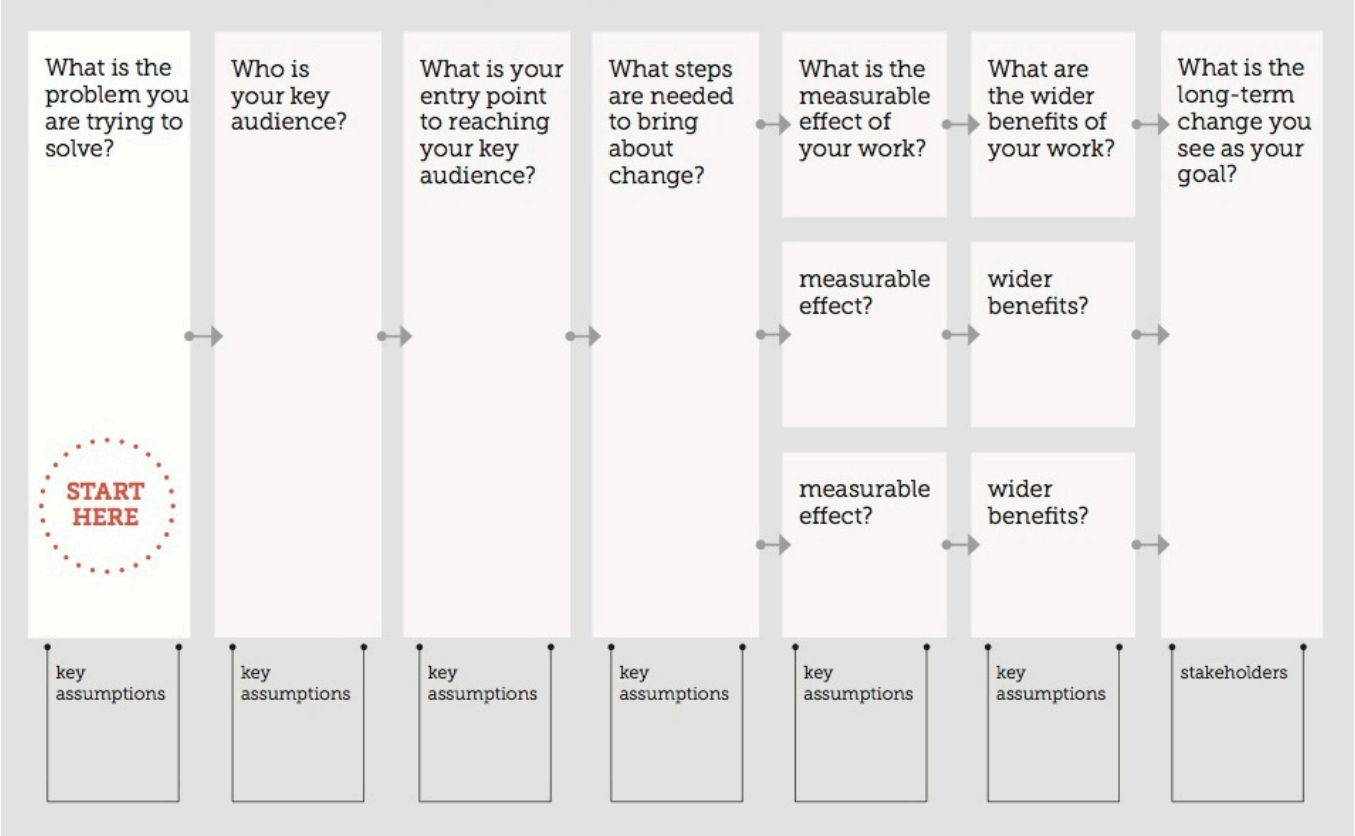
Impact Goal	Target Stakeholders or publics	Reasons for being interested in the project	Activities to engage this target group	Indicators of successful engagement [and means of measurement]	Indicators of progress towards impact [means of measurement]	Risks to activities [and mitigation]	Risks to impact [and mitigation]	Who is responsible and what resources are needed?	Timing

Source: Mark Reed (reproduced with permission)

A **Theory of Change (TOC)** is often used to consider the project as a whole, the risks involved, who to try to influence and how to facilitate change. Mark Reed has numerous resources around Planning for Impact, including stakeholder analysis and partner identification, as well as on devising your own TOC (Reed 2019e).

The Development Impact and You (DIY) website also has a range of templates, including for developing a TOC (DIY n.d).

Figure 8: DIY's Theory of Change template



Source: DIY (diytoolkit.org)

With respect to disseminating your research, establishing a clear and appropriate communication strategy (ACFID 2019b) early is important. This means considering questions like "Who wants or needs this research?" Assuming you have done your stakeholder mapping/analysis it also means thinking about how to publicise the research project, and how to build a consensus, if possible, about the possible adoption of the findings.

The RDI Network's (2019a) *Research Communication and Uptake Snapshot* looks at the factors that can influence research communication and uptake, and offers key recommendations for organisations that fund aid, deliver aid, and those that produce and communicate research.

Planning for impact involves having a clear vision of how to achieve the desired changes, and what steps need to occur for that to happen. Involving local researchers in research publications is a method to ensure that groups not always involved in decision making.

The second case study shows how understanding the desired policy change, coupled with integrated methods to achieve that change, led to research impact to include groups representing people with disability in road planning in Papua New Guinea. It shows how specific tailored outcomes can be developed for different audiences.

Case Study: Travelling Together: Disability Inclusive Road Development in Papua New Guinea

(Summarised from RDI Network 2017a: 65-73)

Roads link communities, facilitate transport of goods and services, enable food security and service delivery. Roads are an important area of policy development as they are a key feature of national and international donor plans for development. People with disabilities make up around 15% of the population of Papua New Guinea (PNG), but were rarely if ever consulted about their needs when it comes to constructing road infrastructure.

The *Travelling Together* project ran from 2010-13 and examined the integration of people with disabilities in road planning in Papua New Guinea. The researchers looked at particular issues like:

- positive and negative impacts of roads on the lives of people with disability;
- how people with disability are currently involved in road and transport planning; and
- recommended approaches for engaging people with disability in road consultations, planning and management.

Using a participatory research design the research team involved a wide range of community members and organisations, so that people with disability and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) played an important role in the design of the project, data collection and analysis, as well as sharing the findings.

By developing participatory, inclusive methods for data collection, including 'Moveabouts' or access audits of short sections of road by people with disability, as well as posters that illustrated what people liked or disliked about the roads they lived by, the research team developed the results by, with, and for the research users.

Travelling Together demonstrates Planning for Impact as it shows the benefit of having an **intentional focus** on impact from the beginning of a project. *Travelling Together*: (1) provided guidelines for road planners on how to effectively include people with disabilities; and (2) assisted people with disabilities and DPOs to use the research findings for advocacy work.

Travelling Together demonstrates a vision of how to plan for research impact. Good planning and project design helped the research team achieve its goals.

3. Engaging End Users: proactive engagement and co-production of knowledge

The third facilitator for enhancing research impact involves engaging research end users through co-production of knowledge. Development research often brings together combinations of people around shared interests, but sometimes they have conflicting agendas. It is important to acknowledge the power differentials that exist between researchers, local community, research beneficiaries, donors and other stakeholders. In particular, consider the challenges of co-authoring with local stakeholders when certain (Western) standards are required to publish in academic journals, or of documenting local knowledge when local knowledge can be viewed as 'less than' academic (Teixeira da Silva 2011).

Researchers seeking research impact through engaging end users will need to navigate the different actors in the development context, as well as find ways to engage ethically and appropriately in order to enhance the potential of collaboration. In development settings, the government is but one actor, and many projects are conducted by or on behalf of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) or International NGOs (INGOs). Either can be research partners as they can use their local networks to facilitate the conduct of research. They can also help to publicise the research outcomes through research dissemination.

Adopting co-production as a principle of research represents a significant shift of power from the researchers or the funders to the research users. Co-production involves the collaborative creation of research outcomes with local partners.

Discussion and Key Issues

Engaging End Users involves two main ideas: proactive engagement and knowledge co-production.

Proactive engagement involves shared decision-making by research partners, as well as informing, consulting, involving, and empowering local research partners. The aim is for all parties in the research to have a sense of ownership over the research, to have their concerns noted, and to have appropriate mechanisms established to deal with any conflicts that may arise.

Knowledge co-production implies deeply embedded collaborative practices, including collaboration in governance, priority setting, conducting research and/or knowledge translation. Knowing with whom to partner links to foundational facilitators, as well as to lasting engagement.

Proactive engagement and co-production of knowledge reduce conflict and result in better research planning, implementation and impact because they allow research end users to have an influence over the future shape of the policies or research recommendations that affect the places in which they live.

Knowledge co-production requires dialogue and recognition of different partners' capabilities and expertise. It requires purposeful discussion around role clarity with a focus on power asymmetry. It also includes creating opportunities for creative problem solving and critical thinking to define a problem, and to establish shared goals and ideal outcomes.

Different Types of End Users

Your research may eventually result in a final report or article, but in the process of conducting the research you will come into contact with a range of different people and audiences who may be able to use your research to promote change.

To influence health or education policy your desired research partner might be officials in those government Ministries, but if it is change at a local level then the local research community can help you identify appropriate people to seek out in your attempt to have the research adopted and used. They might end up being part of the research in a participatory manner.

The co-production of knowledge and deep engagement in research depends on building in the time to work together with diverse research end users, and in part on capitalising on opportunities for open-ended, experimental forms of learning and critical thinking.

While co-production of research is the ideal, there is sometimes a limit to what is possible for communities. Researchers should understand that research projects may create pressure on already strained local institutions trying to manage relationships with multiple development actors. Often these communities have very limited time or resources, for example small island states engaging in ethics processes. Reflect on whether, and if so, how, the research budget can provide extra support, resources, skills training or compensation to local communities for co-production to progress.

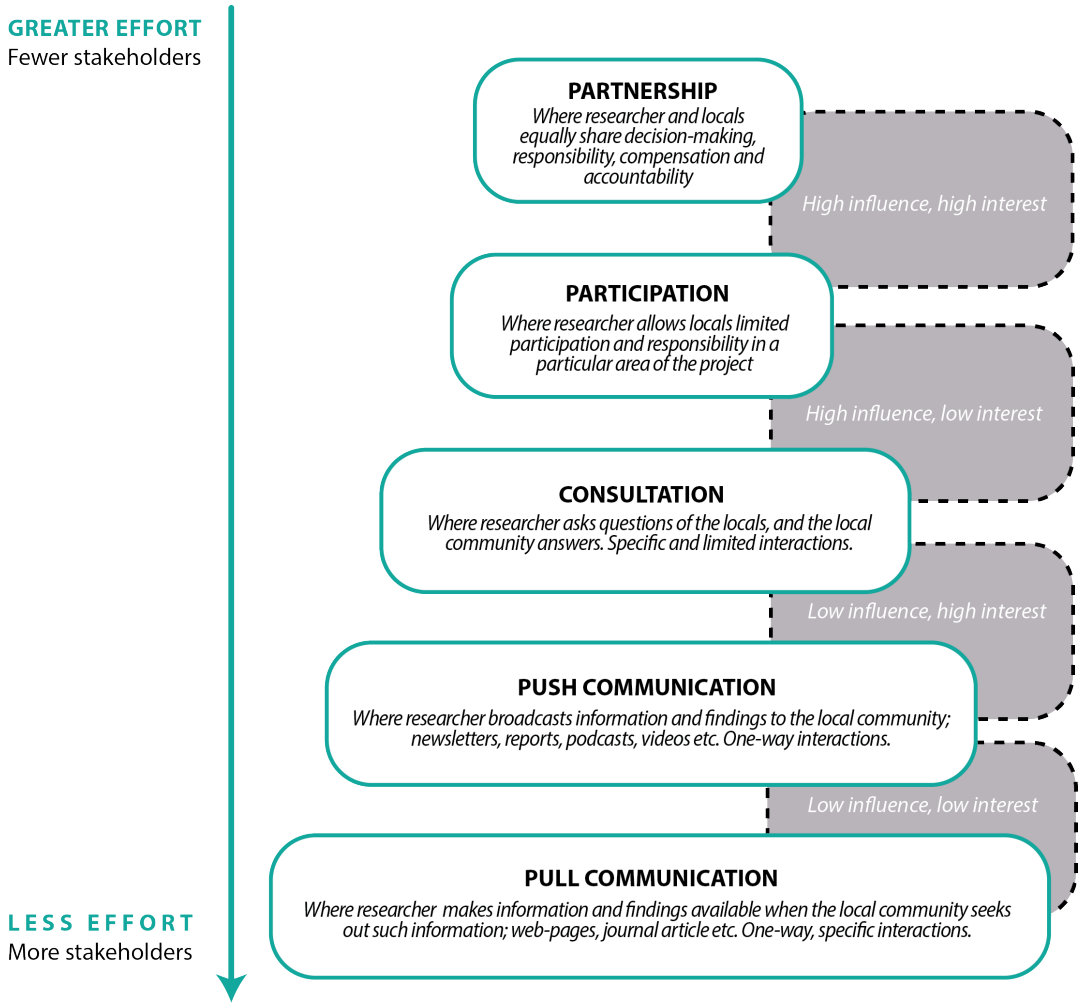
Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder mapping and analysis (Reed 2018a: 156) helps identify the main interested parties, but how can you get them to be engaged in the research? The Project Engineer (2019) website has a stakeholder engagement plan that can get you started in formulating an engagement strategy.

The figure below is adapted from the Project Engineer website and demonstrates that not all stakeholders are equal. It may be useful to use a stakeholder pyramid map to consider the levels of stakeholder engagement, along with the possible level of influence a particular stakeholder may have. What are known as 'Push' and 'Pull' communications are both one-way interactions.

The upper levels of the stakeholder pyramid show that the fewer stakeholders are involved, the higher the influence and interest. In this paradigm, consultation, participation and partnership all involve increasing levels of co-production. They require active listening skills, and a genuine commitment to work with local partners to develop research together that meets local needs.

Figure 9: Stakeholder engagement pyramid



Source: Adapted from Stakeholdermap.com (2019).

Advisory Committee
Creating a stakeholder engagement pyramid will enable you to identify those at the top of the pyramid, and to invite them to partner with you. You could also invite them to be part of an **Advisory Committee** of influential stakeholders for the research.

The composition of such a body needs to be inclusive and representative of the wider community. Establishing trust and respect among research partners will provide the basis for cooperation and future research uptake. Engaging members of an advisory committee (or steering group) from the start of a project should lead to greater knowledge of the research, use of the research and research uptake.

The usual duties of a steering group include the drafting of Terms of Reference, the selection of research partners or consultants, giving feedback and advice during the research process, and assisting in the communication of the project to the wider society or sector. Involvement of a steering group helps to ensures that the end result of the research has been moulded by, and is relevant to, the people who will be using it in the future.

Mark Reed has an example of the Terms of Reference for a Stakeholder Advisory committee (Reed 2018b), as well as information on what matters an Advisory Committee should consider (Reed 2018c). Such a committee should reflect the values of diversity and inclusion, along with gender equality.

Proactive engagement is essential to the translation of research and to its wide adoption, however the different modes of engagement, and the timing of any engagement, needs to be kept flexible during the research so as to respond to changes in, and understanding of, context, relationships and needs.

Co-production in Research
One aspect of co-production involves providing capacity building opportunities for research partners. Your project design should provide training, guidance or mentorship to local researchers and research users.

Academics from several universities in the UK collaborated to produce a report on 'Connected communities' with information on how to engage in co-production at the community level (Derose et al. 2018), including some conceptual tools for substantiating and delivering co-production.

RDI Network's (2017c) *How to Partner for Development Research,* goes through some considerations and tools that will be useful in initiating and managing the co-production of research, such as a responsibility assignment matrix and information on partnership health checks.

The foundations of proactive engagement of research users and co-production are community mobilisation, stakeholder and beneficiary involvement, collaborative planning and resource sharing throughout all phases of research.

The RDI Network often holds consultation roundtables or pilot testing workshops during the research phase to engage with the sector and allow for input before the finalisation stages. The Network also makes public early drafts for comment from anyone who is interested. In 2019, for example, RDI Network held a consultation during the ACFID conference and had the draft guidance document on inclusive research available through the conference phone application ('app') for anyone who wanted the opportunity to read and comment before it was finalised later that year.

Involving end users in research dissemination
Having a communication and engagement plan (SlideTeam 2019) can help you work out how you will get different groups of people to use your research. Having local backing gives you both legitimacy and an outlet for later dissemination.

This might include, for instance, approaching government stakeholders to be co-investigators, or it might involve getting 'endorsement' from a local agency/body for a proposed project before you commence research.

The third case study shows how proactive engagement with local partners based on trust can result in positive change in the form of improved health outcomes.

Case Study: World Vision's Sanitation Program in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

(A Summary of the World Vision webpage: *Innovating for Good: Soapy Hands make for Healthy Children*) (WVI 2019a).

WahanaVisi Indonesia (World Vision Indonesia (WVI 2019b)) partnered with KOHLER Company, through Kohler's *Innovation for Good Program* (Kohler 2019) to reduce incidences of diarrhoea in children, which is one of the main causes of school absenteeism in Indonesia. The partnership adopted a 'Human-Centred Design' (HCD) approach to collaboratively develop innovative, child-friendly, handwashing facilities and programs for a primary school located in the village of Randoria, located in the small city of Ende, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia.

The HCD approach emphasised proactive engagement of stakeholders and community members in three main phases: inspiration, ideation, and implementation. In the start up (inspiration) phase of the project, research users (community, parents, school children, government staff and health workers) were asked to share their current knowledge and practices in sanitation and handwashing, and their aspiration for hygiene and sanitation conditions for their community.

The ideation phase brought together stakeholders (village authorities and teachers) to discuss the data and to create handwashing and sanitation facilities (the 'hardware'), as well as an education program for handwashing promotion (the 'software'). Prototypes were tested with research end users (primary school students) to assess how they worked in a real setting.

The implementation stage brought together WVI-Ende staff, village government representatives, school officers, local entrepreneurs and villagers to build the new facilities. Student ideas and creativity informed the implementation of the education program as they developed a series of visual 'nudges' or reminders around toilet and handwashing facilities to encourage each other to wash their hands immediately after toilet use.

As the World Vision case study shows, good engagement planning facilitated local people to become producers of research knowledge, which enabled them to develop research products for themselves as research users.

4. Influential Outputs: tailored fit-for-purpose design of outputs

The fourth facilitator involves producing influential research outputs designed for specific research users.

If you are a development practitioner, an influential research output might be a report; if you are an academic it might be a journal article. Neither of these research outputs may be suitable for a research community. As different styles of writing and delivery are useful to enhance research impact, choose a style (or styles) of research output most appropriate for the audience.

Discussion and Key Issues

You can tailor your research findings for more immediate effect, or to build interest. For some audiences pictures might be more appropriate than text, as the European Union-sponsored Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT 2014) poster on vote buying at election time (below) demonstrates.

Figure 10: Election Education Poster, Solomon Islands 2014

Recognise Corruption and Bribery

[Man with tie (politician): "I gave you a canoe [banana boat] and an engine so please vote for me". Other man (voter): "It's a done deal"]

Source: Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT 2014)

As always, a researcher should consider the issue of influential outputs at the start of the research to help focus on the intended research outcomes, and on designing the most appropriate methods of research translation.

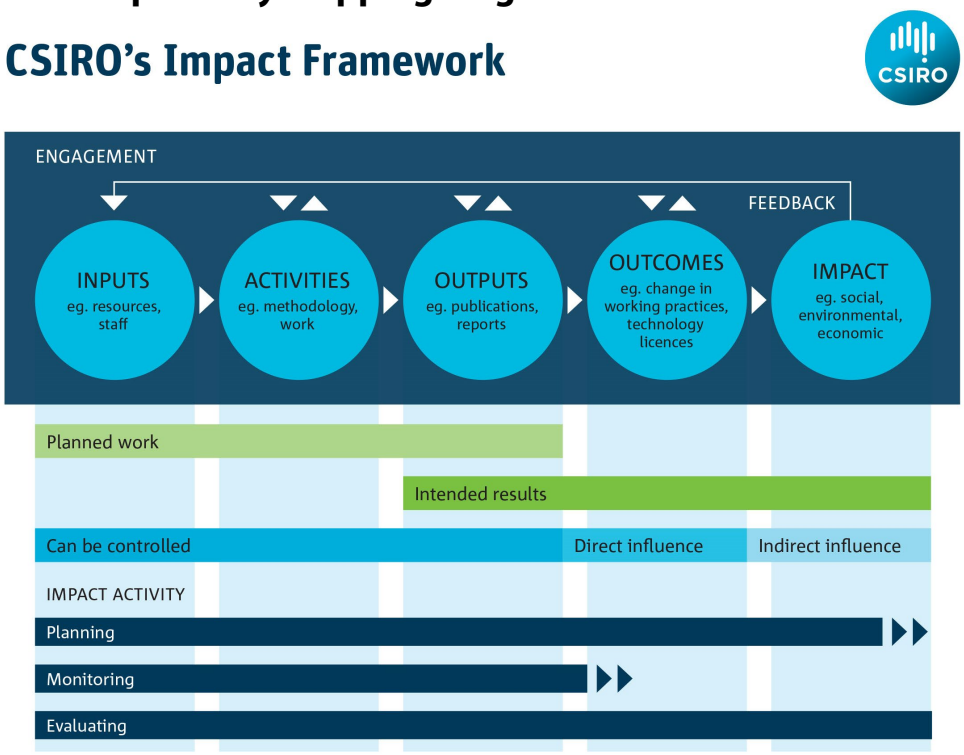
Knowledge brokers

Intermediaries such as knowledge brokers can help link the producers and users of research. These intermediaries can include individuals in advocacy groups, think tanks, the media, donors, regional networks and NGOs, and sometimes designated knowledge-broking organisations. They are typically well-placed individuals with social standing who can make introductions and expand networks. Such people are useful for researchers who can benefit from their association with potential partners or users. Having such knowledge brokers promote or endorse your findings is one way to generate publicity that could lead to research translation, research adoption and research uptake.

Research Impact Plan

While knowledge brokers can assist, making your research outputs influential starts with having a research impact plan (Reed 2019b) an idea of who you are writing for, what you might say, which platforms you are going to use to convey the results, and who you want to notice and use the research. To a great extent this facilitator of influential outputs articulates closely with planning for impact. You can use **impact pathway mapping** to help plot the types of outputs that might be suitable for different audiences during the research. In the example below from the CSIRO "The model captures the process of creating impact which begins with deploying inputs, to conduct research activities and produce outputs, which themselves are translated through short to medium term outcomes into long term impact." The research outputs thus link with research impact through knowledge translation.

Figure 11: CSIRO's pathway mapping diagram



Source: CSIRO, 'Our Impact Model' (CSIRO 2019b).

Influential outputs require research teams to think 'outside the box' when it comes to designing 'fit-for purpose' outputs. The table below suggests different forms of research outputs, and which groups might be likely to use them.

Output type	Potential User
Journal Article/Book	Academics, researchers, NGOs, donors
Commissioned Reports	Government, Companies, Charities, Churches
Other Reports	Local community, government or business groups
Meetings and Verbal Briefings	Communities, donors, all stakeholders
Video	Local community, global public
Websites	General public, researchers, donors, government
Blogs	General public, researchers, donors, government
Opinion Pieces and Commentary	General public, researchers, donors, government
Social Media	Communities, Global public, researchers, donors, government
Policy Briefs	Researchers, donors, government
Position Papers	Researchers, donors, government
Evidence Summaries	Researchers, donors, government
Working Papers	Academics, government
Launches	Local community, stakeholders
Podcasts	General public
Art Exhibitions, Posters and Illustration	Local community, local population, stakeholders
Workshops, toolkits and other forms of training	Invited stakeholders, research participants
Musical or Dramatic production	Local community, donors

Some of these outputs will be co-produced, some you might write in a small team, and some you may write alone. The level of co-production might depend on how quickly you need to produce an output, as well as the most appropriate medium to engage the audience, and how you seek to engage with that group. If you are working at a university or for a large International NGO, you may also have access to dedicated expertise in the form of communications specialists who can assist you to produce professional targeted outputs using photographs, graphics, charts, maps and other illustrations.

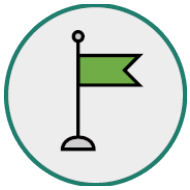
Local Languages

Translation of communications into appropriate local languages should be planned for in advance, as translation can be expensive and can take time to get right. For Timor Leste, for example, you may wish to translate your research into the official languages of Tetun/Tetum or Portuguese to affect government policy, but if the project is located outside the capital of Dili, then consider translating into one or more indigenous languages: Bekais, Bunak, Fataluuku, Galoli, Habun, Idalaka, Kawaimina, Kemak, Lovaia, Makalero, Makasae, Mambai, Tokodede, or Wetarese. A decision on whether to translate research findings into a local language will depend on how many speakers may be involved, whether they speak more common languages, funding, and whether it is deemed necessary.

For people with low levels of literacy a verbal format, accompanied by presentations involving symbolic icons, pictures, maps or graphs, may be the best way to communicate outputs.

Sometimes research impact is more about luck and timing than the quality of the research. Your work on Disaster Relief might be cutting edge, but only when a bushfire or tsunami occurs might people search for it, read it and adopt it. Political cycles also provide moments when research can have greater impact as in the lead up to an election, a political party might be seeking to develop a policy. Planning how to engage for impact can thus involve some consideration of political timing.

Tools and Techniques to Enhance Research Impact



The type of research output you adopt will be shaped by the audience you want to influence. The examples below are not meant to be exhaustive; the types of possible research output are limited only by your imagination.

Journal Articles and Books are refereed works of evidence and argument. They are highly valued in academia, but often not widely read outside of academia. They usually take months or years to develop and publish. They are the type of research outputs academics typically include as outputs when developing grant applications, but few people in the development context may ever read them.

There are numerous journals in any academic field, and some universities rank the quality of publications by a journal's 'impact factor' (IF). A number of sites exist that rank journals, for example Scimago Journal and Country Rank site (Scimago 2019) places journals in quartiles of excellence (Q1-Q4) and gives them a ranking.

When publishing for impact, Open Access journals allow users in low resource settings to download papers for free, however there is often a publishing cost to the author/institution that affects project budget. Books and refereed journal articles remain the gold standard of Universities; they are important for enhancing academic reputation, but other publishing or creative options may provide more immediate in-country research adoption and uptake.

Commissioned Reports
Working for an NGO or a government will likely require you to produce a report for that body. Such reports are often 'commercial in confidence' so your report might be closely guarded, for example an assessment of a government aid program. It might still have impact if it effects aid policy, but it may not be read by many people. An NGO might have more interest in publishing your report. At the start of your research it is useful to know whether you will be permitted to publish the research in either an altered or unaltered state. Report templates are commonly available on most software packages.

Other Reports
Governments in many countries do not always have funding to commission reports, but that does not mean to say they are not interested. Linking with a local government agency can provide legitimacy and local endorsement, and it can help you to establish networks. Strong partnerships with local authorities can help with promotion of your research and can help to lay the foundation for dissemination of your research product. A research team investigating food security in Solomon Islands (Georgeou et .al 2018) linked with Honiara City Council (HCC) to seek its cooperation in conducting research on produce coming into the Honiara Central Market. They wrote up their research as a report that was posted on the HCC website.

Meetings
In some cultures, oral briefings might work better than printed reports. Village meetings can bring together all local parties, who might be research users, to explain the project and its findings. In their food security research in Solomon Islands, the research team discussed the project in village meetings before commencement (Georgeou and Hawksley 2017). Later they returned to work with the community to analyse data and confirm initial findings. The Savo Island people later used the printed research report to lobby government to get agricultural advice on new kinds of insects that were damaging their crops.

Video
Co-production of research outputs may take the form of a short video. A team researching environmental change in Vanuatu produced two short videos *Helti Fuja* (Vimeo 2020) and *Tasi Vanua* (YouTube 2020) by engaging the community in the research. Local people were interviewed and gave their views on the changing climate. If you do not have video-making or editing expertise, ask one of the digitally savvy younger generation to help, then post your effort on Vimeo or YouTube.

Figure 12: Stills from *Helti Fuja* on YouTube and Vimeo.

Source: YouTube and Vimeo

Websites
Your research project might generate publicity while you are conducting the project, and especially after the research is concluded. The *Travelling Together* site is still up (MU 2016), several years after the conclusion of the project. Universities profile their research and researchers, and most NGOs have websites. Website and webpage creation is simple with computer software, and some sites are free. This article from Techradar (Techradar.pro 2020) discusses the pros and cons of seven different free web design sites. You might use your website to promote the research; short articles and photographs will help break up text on the landing page.

Blogs
A 'blog' (from 'weblog') is like a diary of the researcher's experiences or views on a topic. Blogs can be done daily, weekly or occasionally. The audience will depend on who knows about the blog's existence. Link it to your research project website or promote it through social media. Keep your blogs short and interesting.

Opinion Pieces and Commentaries
Online media sites can lift your profile as a researcher. Many sites like *The Conversation* (2020), *DevPolicy Blog* (2020), *East Asia Forum* (2020), *Australian Outlook* (2020) or *The Diplomat* (2020) publish contributions from academia and practitioners. They tend to solicit or accept topical short articles (usually about 800-1000 words) and generally edit them for style. Typically, opinion pieces and commentaries are written in approachable, even punchy, language and do not contain the detailed evidence normally seen in academic journals, so are more accessible to the general public.

Social Media
There are many different social media applications ('apps') and platforms, and new apps are being invented every year. Expanding mobile phone coverage enables the rapid and wide dispersal and dissemination of information through social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter. You audience is however limited to who follows, shares or 'retweets' your message.

A Facebook page (Facebook 2020) for a project or a group of researchers can be set through the 'Create' button of your account. Twitter (2020) and LinkedIn (2020) can also be used to promote your research through short messages. Both allow you to post photographs, so you can link your post or 'tweet' with a research output (a policy brief or a website). Naming research partners ('tagging') can increase adoption and circulation. Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube can also be used to expand the reach of your networks, but the audience will depend on how many people know of your project's postings in the first place, or of you.

Policy Briefs
Somewhere between the online article and the academic article lies the policy brief. Another name for this might be a short working paper. A policy brief is a research outcome containing some data, some analysis and an outline of the general argument or recommendations. Often developed relatively quickly after fieldwork, or in response to an event, a policy brief is about 4-6 pages (about 2000 words) and can be used as the basis for later outputs. The International Centre for Policy Advocacy has a useful guide (ICPA 2017) to writing a policy brief. Asia Pacific Centre for Responsibility to Protect (APCR2P 2020) publishes Policy Briefs that aim to inform and contribute to debates on human rights protection and evolving norms in international affairs.

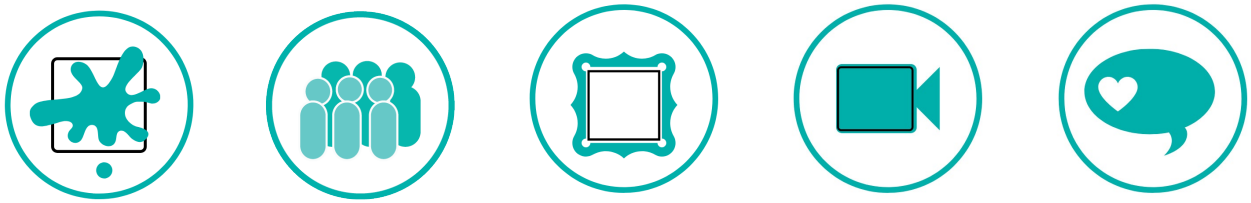
Position Papers
An organisation that has something to say about a topic might write a position paper—a short response to a specific Issue. Examples include the International Women's Development Agency position papers on Climate Change, and on Infrastructure, both of which (IWDA 2020a) highlight how these matters will affect women in developing countries.

Evidence Summaries
In some fields like health care, it might be useful to get research out quickly, and an evidence summary can present basic findings in accessible language, with key messages, some evidence and the next steps for research. The resource palliAged (2020) has several examples of evidence summaries.

Working Papers
Working papers vary in length but generally develop an idea that is not yet published in a finished form in a refereed journal. Publishing in this form generally does not preclude you from later seeking publication in a refereed journal article. Working papers need to be targeted, focussed and discipline specific as a working paper in health will be structed differently to one in economics. The European Network for Housing Research (ENHR 2020) has a helpful guide to writing working papers.

Launches
A launch of research findings can bring stakeholders together into the same room. This can allow you to introduce the research team members to stakeholders, and sometimes stakeholders to each other. Launches are social events, and people tend to be more relaxed than in more formal meetings. Free events will expand the audience, but also the project costs if catering. Some sites like Eventbrite (2020) can help you manage and promote your event.

Art Exhibitions



Whether it is gender-based violence, new agricultural techniques, literacy or microfinance, creative people have non-verbal ways to express feelings, relationships and concepts. Art exhibitions are a way to engage local communities, who might produce the artworks themselves. Local artists or art collectives may also be able to create commissioned works. International Organisations like the United Nations sometimes use art exhibitions to raise awareness of important social issues, such as gender-based violence (UNAIDS 2013). Art is of particular value in communities with low levels of literacy.

Podcasts
A podcast is an extended audio discussion of a subject in some depth. Many people commute to work on public transport, and podcasts can break the monotony. Many universities are adopting podcasts (US 2020) to increase their research footprint. If you make a podcast highlighting your research, link it to your website. The International Women's Development Agency (IWDA 2020b) has a page of podcasts on global development.

Workshops, toolkits and other forms of training
Where research leads to actionable recommendations, outputs may include an element of training. This could be in the form of a workshop, a toolkit or an interactive website. It could even extend to the creation of more comprehensive training, such as a one- or two-day course, or the incorporation of a module into an existing course at a university or technical college, a technical and vocational education and training college, a professional development course, or even a school curriculum.

Musical or dramatic production
In situations where literacy is low, a song or play might be a useful way of getting the research findings across to a community. Again, co-production is the key to local research uptake and ownership.

The above output styles are ideas only. **Influential Outputs** may require multiple outputs to target different audiences. Your research impact plan should articulate the different audiences and outputs, as well as your strategies for getting the research project and the research findings 'out there'.

Case study: The International Coalition for Trachoma Control (Adapted from the Fred Hollows Foundation) (FHF 2019)

Trachoma is a disease that can cause irreversible blindness. It is caused by the micro-organism Chlamydia trachomatis (*C. trachomatis*) that is spread when the ocular or nasal discharge from an infected person is passed on to another person through touch. In 2003 there were an estimated 1.845 billion people living in areas where trachoma was endemic (GHB, 2015: 24), with large concentrations in the developing world: 33.7% of people in the Western Pacific; 29% in Africa; 24.5% in SE Asia; 11.5% in the Eastern Mediterranean and 1.3% in the Americas.

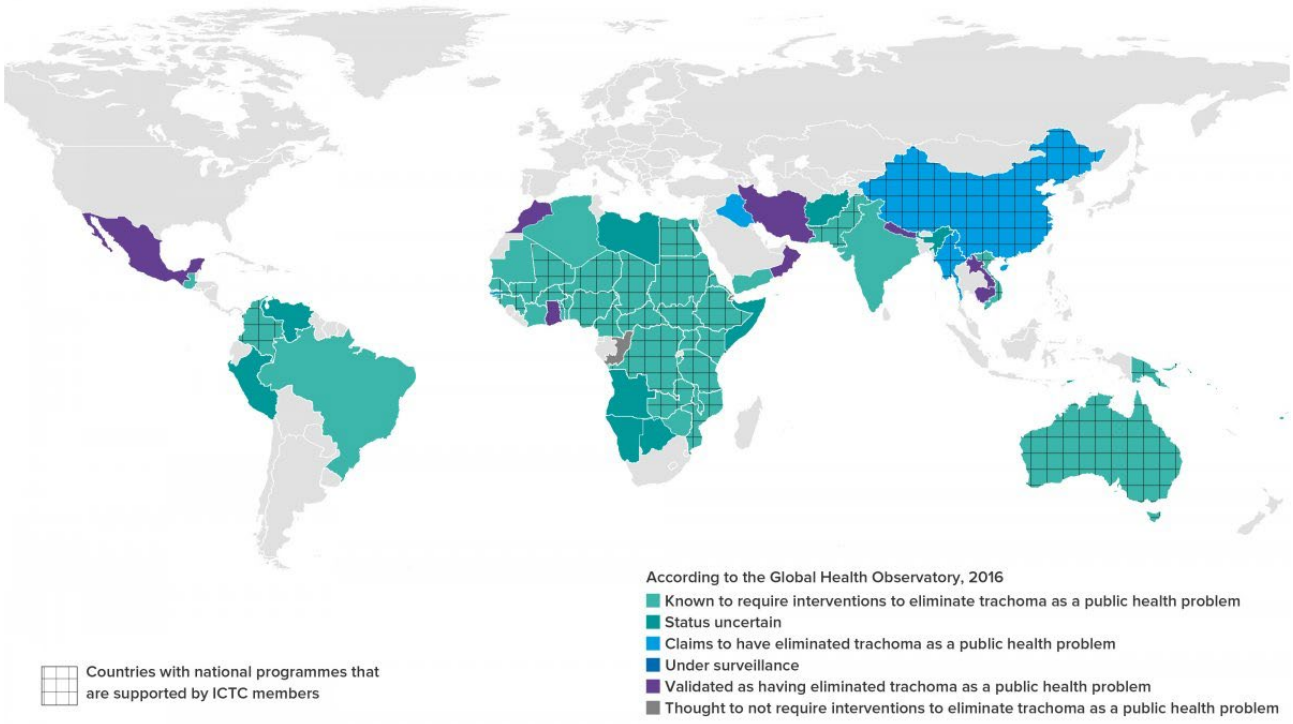
Children most often carry the infection. Repeated trachoma infection inflames and thickens the upper eyelid. As the eye scars, the eyelid turns in on itself. With continued repeated infection over many years, the eye lashes start to scratch the eye's cornea, leading to irreversible blindness. This late stage of the disease predominantly impacts adults, and particularly women as the primary caregivers of infected children.

Surgery can restore people's sight, but basic medical treatment and access to clear water can stop trachoma from spreading in the first place. Between 2002-2019, the prevalence of trachoma in our world reduced from over 1.5 billion people at risk, to 142.2 million, a reduction of 91%. This is largely due to the work of the **International Coalition for Trachoma Control** (ICTC). Founded in 2004, the ICTC involves a range of actors (NGOs, donors, private sector and academic institutions) and aims to combat trachoma through close collaboration to deliver a range of **influential outputs**.

ICTC members shared annual work plans to avoid duplication and maximise efficiencies. By working together they were able to document operational effectiveness. This led to ICTC being able to identify implementation gaps and develop joint funding proposals.

In terms of influential outputs, the ICTC developed the Global Trachoma Mapping Project (GTMC) (Sightsavers 2019) as the key research component of the initiative. The ongoing work that stemmed from the GTMC, which concluded in 2016, ensures ICTC continues to have the data needed to make informed programming decisions both locally and globally. The website (ICTC 2020) has videos, blogs, news and other links.

Figure 14: Where International Coalition for Trachoma Control Members Work

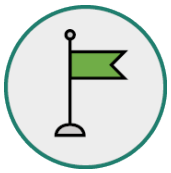


Source: ICTC (2020)

The case of the ICTC shows the primary or ultimate goal has been the near elimination of trachoma as a public health problem. To get there the ICTC needed to carefully plan and coordinate trachoma control programs, including activities relating to surveillance and validation. To achieve that required the national health systems of states to fully engage with the research process, to back it financially and with skilled people, as well as providing the technical expertise. The ICTC developed a suite of guidance materials, drove advocacy and mobilised resources to develop state capacity.

Designing tailor-made influential outputs has been key to the ICTC's success, and like many successful development research projects, the key has been co-production. The example of the ICTC shows how a variety of research outputs may be required to achieve research impact.

5. Lasting Engagement: ongoing engagement and continuity of relationships



So the data collection is over and you have acknowledged the different contributions of all participants to the research. What now? Are you developing other joint projects together with these research partners? If so, who will be maintaining the research relationship? How often is this happening? Can you fund follow-up extensions to maximise the impact of this research?

The final facilitator **Lasting Engagement** stresses ongoing collaboration with partners and stakeholders, even after the conclusion of a project. Lasting engagement can assist in enhancing research impact by building on reciprocal partnerships that involve ongoing communications and advocacy. It links strongly with ethical research approaches and requires 'paying back' or 'paying forward' the time and resources that others put into a research project. This creates ongoing loops of relationships, trust and the enabling of future co-production.

Discussion and Key Issues

From Evidence to Impact found that some projects made contributions to development outcomes long after the research had ended through sustained engagement with local partners. One Principle Investigator stated; "The policy recommendations evolved after ongoing follow up with key people. It was probably more than a year before movement started" (RDI Network 2017a: 41).

Ongoing engagement enables a research team to manage expectations, identify issues as they arise, and maintain a clarity of vision for the future. This avoids confusion or dissatisfaction within the team, as people are clear about their roles.

Continued engagement with research partners can provide further learning and capacity building opportunities for all involved. It is useful to discuss with research partners the issue of sustainability early on, so as to clarify the different levels of commitment of the partners involved, the expectations of who will do what, and how activities can be resourced. Often it will be the in-country research partners who continue to engage with the key stakeholders, promoting further outcomes, and that effort should be supported. This may include considering providing core funding, rather than project by project funding, to maintain and support the staff, as well as any follow-on projects.

Lasting engagement can mean returning to the same research site, perhaps a village or region, year after year. This may involve long-term sustained communications between researchers, communities and research users. Lasting Engagement links strongly with **foundational facilitators**, which discusses how to partner with communities.

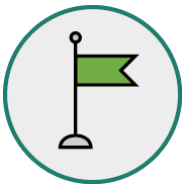
Maintaining existing research relationships can be challenging as new projects emerge elsewhere and people often move on to different organisations. For this reason, it is important that key stakeholders are engaged/consulted at the end of the project period and thanked for their time and other resources. Ending a research project well is a means to lasting engagement in the future, and to collaborating with people with whom you have worked effectively in the past.

Tools and Techniques to Enhance Research Impact

Pathways from research engagement to influence can be (but are not always) long, complex and opportunistic. Oxfam's Duncan Green has written on critical junctures, arguing that "… crises, conflicts, failures and scandals, … disrupt social, political or economic relations, creating an appetite for new ideas and opening the door to previously unthinkable reforms" (Greene 2017: 2-3). At the same time, not everything is up to chance.

Ethical Engagement

Working with communities in an ethical manner will assist in creating the links that sustain future projects. RDI Network has guides to ethical research approaches to working with communities, and on working with Churches in the Pacific (RDI Network 2017b; 2018), while CSIRO (2019a) has published its own guide on Principles and Practices of Ethical Community Engagement.



Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
In any research project lifecycle there are opportunities for assessment and reflection through the monitoring and evaluation ('M&E') of the research. Conducting M&E on an humanitarian aid or development program is typically a requirement of the donor agency, as programs are reviewed for effectiveness and value for money.

M&E is normally conducted mid-way through and at the end of the project lifecycle, but it should be planned for from the start. A midterm-project evaluation may identify that your research is, or is not, having the desired impact and may give you time to adjust your method or approach. To gather evidence of impact, a follow up evaluation should be done after one or two years, or even longer depending on the initial length and outcomes of the research project. Larger long-term research projects may want to invest in a longitudinal impact study.

Larger INGOs may have specialised M&E staff to assist in the process, or some projects may engage independent evaluation teams from universities or consultancy companies. Those running smaller projects may undertake the M&E themselves. SoPact, a impact measurement and management company, and BetterEvaluation, have a range of M&E tools (Sopact 2019; BetterEvaluation 2020) available on their websites which may be useful.

ACFID and the RDI Network worked together to create the 2018 publication *Demonstrating Outcomes and Impact across difference scales* (ACFID/RDI Network 2018). It was designed to advance a sector-wide dialogue on the strategic use of monitoring, evaluation, learning and reporting systems, and to advance the case for applying M&E processes to capture, integrate and report outcomes and impact at different scales.

The final case study shows how lasting engagement facilitates cooperation and co-production for enhanced research impact.

Case Study: Triple Jeopardy—gender-based violence and disability in Cambodia (A summary of *From Evidence to Impact* 2017a: 74-80)

The *Triple Jeopardy* research project aimed to understand the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) experienced by Cambodian women with disabilities compared to their peers without disabilities; assess the extent to which existing policies and programs include or address women with disabilities; and explore the levels of access women with disabilities experienced when engaging with existing programs.

Triple Jeopardy included researchers from organisations representing both women's development and disabled persons. From Australia there was International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) and CBM Australia for Disability. From Cambodia there was the Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation for disability and the women's organisation *Banteay Srei*.

The study highlighted the experiences of Cambodian women with disabilities who experience multiple disadvantages resulting from the interplay between gender, disability and poverty, and the multiple barriers they face accessing support services. Bringing together key stakeholders from the different policy and organisational sectors of gender and disability assisted in research design and outcomes that bridged organisational and policy 'silos'.

A participatory approach to the research design and implementation ensured joint learning about the different experiences of women with disabilities in terms of violence related to support services. It ensured that expertise was available in all areas, including research, disability and gender, and that each partner learned new skills from the other, developing mutual capacity (Astbury and Walji 2013: 33).

The involvement of a range of stakeholders throughout the entire research process ensured that there was ongoing involvement of team members and research beneficiaries in the research, as well as in the advocacy and implementation of the research findings.

Triple Jeopardy built on the existing links of IWDA in Cambodia, which allowed researchers to recruit research participants (Astbury and Walji 2013: 31). Lasting engagement allowed for partner input that built trust and facilitated the co-production of a working paper containing quality data about violence against women with disabilities, as well as training resources. *Triple Jeopardy* has a website (IWDA 2020c), with a range of outputs, including a report and cards in English and Khmer.

Significantly the working paper has an Acknowledgements section that thanks all those who contributed to the research project, including the research participants—the women who shared their experiences of gender-based violence and disability.

This example shows that **lasting engagement** can lead to cooperation, co-production and **influential outputs** to enhance research impact in international development.

Conclusions

This guide has utilised the Framework for Exploring Research for Development Impact (FERDI) and discussed the five facilitators of research impact:

- Foundational Facilitators
- Planning for Impact
- Engaging End Users
- Influential Outputs
- Lasting Engagement

While each facilitator has been explained and explored in detail, they do intersect and overlap. Together, the five facilitators demonstrate that enhancing research impact depends on several factors:

- PARTNERSHIP — GOOD WILL, TRUST AND RECIPROCITY;
- ENGAGEMENT — LOCAL PEOPLE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BEING EMPOWERED TO IMPLEMENT CHANGE IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES;
- CO-PRODUCTION— LOCAL PARTNERS HAVING OWNERSHIP OF THE RESEARCH THROUGH INPUT INTO RESEARCH DESIGN AND CONDUCT;
- RIGOUR— THE IMPORTANCE OF POLICY-RELEVANT, EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH; AND
- CREATIVITY — MOVING BEYOND TRADITIONAL ACADEMIC PUBLICATION OUTPUTS TO ENGAGE SPECIFIC AUDIENCES IN APPROPRIATE MEDIA.

For readers, some parts of this guide have no doubt been more useful than others. Hopefully there has been something helpful when next working with local partners and conducting research in a development context.

While this guide is not meant to be a handbook on how to conduct development research, the RDI Network encourages all researchers to engage with their published materials on engaging ethically and sensitively with communities. Over the page are further resources to assist you to enhance your research impact in international development.

Further Resources and References

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