Improving Knowledge Transfer

These guides are an output of the DFID-funded Urbanisation Knowledge and Research project:
Improving Research Knowledge Technical Transfer (RKT) 

1 Identifying the users of development knowledge

Guides in this series
1 Identifying the users of development knowledge
2 Improving communication between potential partners in urban development
3 Understanding how the urban poor learn and communicate
4 Intermediaries in knowledge transfer and exchange
5 Identifying the appropriate media for communication
6 Strategies for communication and knowledge exchange: the role of researchers in developing countries
7 Strategies for communication and knowledge exchange: the role of donors
8 Strategies for communication and knowledge exchange: the role of local intermediaries

Further Guides in this series are in preparation

Purpose of the Guides

There is growing awareness that researchers in developed countries need to be more active and imaginative in the dissemination of the development knowledge they produce.

Technological innovation in communication is giving knowledge producers and communicators an increasing array of media to get their message across to a variety of audiences within a shorter time scale. At the same time, greater ease of communication on a global scale, particularly through the electronic media, is making networking an increasingly large component of research and development practice.

All this implies a greater potential capacity on the part of researchers, and pressure on them to respond to demand and to ensure the more rapid dissemination of research knowledge. However, researchers often have limited resources and they may be unfamiliar with the wide range of methods for knowledge transfer or lack the necessary skills and understanding required for good communication.

This set of guides provides a simplified framework for researchers in urban development for developing countries. It will aid researchers in this field in designing effective strategies for communication so that the new knowledge from their research is easily accessible and understood by their target audience. These guides will also help researchers to assess the resource implications of putting such strategies into practice. The responsibility of researchers in this process is clear. It extends beyond simply ensuring that the knowledge they produce is accessible to a range of potential users within the shortest possible time.

Communication is a two-way process. Researchers must be capable of responding to both need and demand as presented to them, as well as pursuing their own research interests within an academic or institutional framework.

The guides set out a series of strategies to improve research communication between the researcher and each of the principle interest groups in the urban development process. There is an emphasis on understanding how the poor in urban areas learn and communicate.

The guides are also aimed at improving the channels of communication and knowledge transfer between all interest groups to create active partnerships in decision-making for sustainable local urban development.

This community-based organisations themselves, and other intermediaries representing the interest of the urban poor, can ensure that the knowledge that is produced and communicated can better reflect their needs. The more informed the poor, the more empowered they are, to initiate and negotiate development changes in their communities that reflect their real needs and concerns.

Feedback

If you have any comments about the content and presentation and on how it may be improved or if you simply wish to join our mailing list, please contact:
Improving Knowledge Transfer in Urban Development
Max Lock Centre
School of the Built Environment
University of Westminster
35 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5LS
United Kingdom
maxlock@wmin.ac.uk
Tel: +44 20 7911 5000 ext 3120
Fax: +44 20 7911 5171

Max Lock Centre Research Team
William Erickson, Catalina Gandelosnas, Ripin Kalra, Ghislaine T. Tony Lloyd-Jones, Mark Povey, Dr Michael Theis, Luisa Vallejo

Identifying the key actors with a stake in the urban development process is a necessary first step in any intervention whether it is research policy, programme, project or general good practice. To ensure success, it will be necessary to establish the respective interests, roles and responsibilities of the key actors that bring about change to benefit the urban poor.

Those who are funding research targeted at poverty reduction will be concerned that the knowledge that is produced is effective. Researchers will have to demonstrate to their funders that their strategies for knowledge transfer empower the poor as well as improve the capacity and extent of the other actors to contribute positively to urban poverty reduction.

The actors may have interactions with each other as both co-operators and rivals. Researchers should understand the structure and likely movements within this essentially fluid process and ensure appropriate and understandable knowledge is openly available to all.

Typically, interventions in urban development can involve any combination of interest groups, any of which might be targeted as users of research knowledge whether they are initiating the development; are subject to it; wish to be part of it; modify it or are opposed to it. This Guide 1 identifies and describes the likely interest groups.
Identifying the users of development knowledge

Identifying the key actors with a stake in the urban development process is a necessary first step in any intervention whether it is research policy, programme, project or general good practice. To ensure success, it will be necessary to establish the respective interests, roles and responsibilities of the key actors that bring about change to benefit the urban poor. Typically, interventions in urban development can involve any combination of interest groups, any of which might be targeted as users of research knowledge whether they are initiating the development; are subject to it; wish to be part of it; modify it or are opposed to it. This Guide 1 identifies and describes the likely interest groups.

Identifying the key actors in the urban development process

Identifying the key actors with a stake in the urban development process is a necessary first step in any intervention whether it is research policy, programme, project or general good practice. This first step is essential by those involved in the production and transfer of development research knowledge in their respective communities. The complexities in the development process need to be appreciated. The actors may have interactions with each other as both co-operators and rivals. These relationships will often change in their strengths during the negotiations surrounding a development. One actor or a combination of actors may dominate the scene at any one time. Researchers should understand the structure and likely movements within this essentially fluid process and ensure appropriate and understandable knowledge is openly available to all. It will often be crucial to the survival of networks and communities essential to the opportunities for the urban poor to improve their livelihoods and maintain their future stability.

Typically, interventions in urban development can involve any combination of the following interest groups, any of which might be targeted as users of research knowledge whether they are initiating the development, are subject to it; wish to be part of it; modify it or are opposed to it.

Low-income or economically weaker households

In the context of these guides, they are the primary stakeholders. Households living in close proximity in neighbourhoods and urban districts form social networks and communities based on common interests (nef). These are represented by:

Community-based organisations (CBOs)

Identifiable community organisations often form the point of contact with low-income communities, although such organisations may not necessarily be representative. Other points of contact include informal spokespersons, political or religious leaders and ‘elders’.

Non-government organisations (NGOs)

NGOs are non-commercial or voluntary organisations usually serving a specific social purpose. NGOs may be based locally such as charity or religious organisations but more often form part of national or international organisations or networks. NGOs often have the interest in and resources to provide effective assistance to low-income communities. Housing pressure groups, associations, corporations and societies are particularly active (nef). However, the specific orientation of many NGOs often means they serve only the narrow purpose for which they were set up. The broader needs of the whole community are then missed.

Local governments

Local governments are key players and are generally involved in urban development in one role or another – as regulatory bodies, service providers, implementers of policy handed down from a higher level or in a facilitating role. As statutory authorities employing permanent staff, they can wield enormous power in development both favourable and unfavourable to the urban poor. Illegal development may take place without initial local government knowledge or involvement (turning a blind eye) but this can only serve to delay a more direct involvement when informal settlements are regulated.

The complexities need to be appreciated

The complexities in the development process need to be appreciated and understood. The actors may have interactions with each other as both co-operators and rivals. These relationships will often change in their strengths during the negotiations surrounding a development. One actor or a combination of actors may dominate the scene at any one time. Researchers should understand the structure and likely movements within this essentially fluid process and ensure appropriate and understandable knowledge is openly available to all. It will often be crucial to the survival of networks and communities essential to the opportunities for the urban poor to improve their livelihoods and maintain their future stability.

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National governments

National governments normally have a less direct role in local development, determining the policy, legal and institutional frameworks within which such development takes place. They normally control a large proportion of the funding of local government. National or state public sector bodies such as railways, utilities and housing and urban development corporations can have an important direct role in land development. The public sector (central and local) is a major local employer in urban areas that are administrative headquarters.

Donors from developed countries and international development organisations

This includes the self-employed in the informal sector and local business organisations that employ small numbers of people. The emphasis is on petty trading and services (such as domestic service and maintenance) but small-scale manufacture may also be significant in some neighbourhoods. Informal employment is now the major source of livelihoods for poor people in most developing world cities and the informal sector and small enterprise is primarily responsible for servicing low-income communities. Small businesses may be significant local landowners. Recent research has indicated that this small scale ‘informal’ sector can in fact play a major, even if difficult to quantify, part of many urban economies (nef).

Small private enterprise or the ‘informal sector’

Medium and large scale private enterprise

Medium and large companies play an important role in local development either in the development process itself – as landowners, developers or financing institutions – or in economic development as employers and/or service providers. Medium and large-scale private enterprise is mainly responsible for bringing external trade and investment to urban areas and providing the stimulus for secondary service activity (nef).

Consultants, professional groups

Along with NGOs, consultants can be key intermediaries and essential advisors for the ill informed in the development process. They are experienced in dealing in situations where there is a funding client on the one hand and a user group ‘client’ on the other. They may be called on to negotiate between a number of potentially conflicting interest groups. More socially committed professional and technical personnel may choose to work in the public or social sector where they can have an important advocacy role (nef).
The diagram below identifies lines of access and actors. It reveals complex and intricate relationships to which dissemination media, technologies, techniques and institutional arrangements must respond. Often several actors must be involved at once in order to tap and disseminate the wealth of innovation and wisdom implicit in the minds and practices of those working and coping on the ground as well as understand the information needs of various actors.

Among all the stakeholders the weakest link is that between technical institutions and grassroots workers particularly Community Based Organisations (CBOs).

These issues are dealt with further in Guide 4: Intermediaries in knowledge transfer and exchange.

They are major opinion formers. The local mass media can be critical in ensuring whether beneficial development takes place or not. Too often subservient to the interest of the local power elite, local media can also be a strong force for the general good and champions of disadvantaged social groups. Professionally briefed, they can set out the issues in a clear and unbiased manner. Lack of professional technical knowledge in their reporters and presenters can lead to unintentional misunderstandings.

Barriers of communication among key actors

Local media groups

Local universities and researchers

Universities and researchers in developed countries

Though often woefully under-funded, academic institutions in the developing countries have a key role in developing professional and technical capacity. They also have an important potential or actual role in undertaking local research, acting as professional advisers and mediators and gathering reliable data.

These also have an important role in developing capacity in developing countries through training of professionals and academics. They are increasingly assuming the role of international knowledge collection, analysis and distribution points.

*However, only some of the actors taking part in development interventions in urban areas, and perhaps only a minority, are concerned with improving the conditions of the poor. Development in the urban context commonly refers to land and building development. In the context of these guides, development is used in the sense of socially beneficial change, in particular change that benefits the urban poor.

These issues are dealt with further in Guide 4: Intermediaries in knowledge transfer and exchange.
Targeting various stakeholders

Research: Core Area Development, Max Lock Centre, University of Westminster, London

The UK Department For International Development (DFID) has funded a research project which will provide both guidelines for urban design and frameworks for urban management and finance to facilitate the integrated and balanced development of commercial core areas of rapidly growing cities in the developing world. In the following description of outputs the information needs of the various actors have been identified.

Outputs of the study

The aim is to produce a set of urban design and development tools - methods, principles, examples of good practice - which will enable low-income communities to live close to the source of their livelihood within the commercial centres of these cities.

These tools, grouped together within a 'Guide to Good Practice', are targeted at a range of potential users. The primary users include:

- Low-income communities themselves who need practical guidance in negotiating their futures with landowners, developers, employers and city institutions
- NGOs, consultants and technical aid organisations involved in aiding low-income urban communities on the ground
- Planning authorities, public development agencies and other urban management bodies who need guidelines in facilitating partnerships between stakeholders in core area developments
- Developers, financial institutions and landowners who are most likely to be the initiators of development and prime beneficiaries, in commercial terms, and who need to negotiate with existing low-income communities and urban authorities in developing core area sites in cities

At another level, the Guide is intended to be of use to policy-makers in donor organisations, governments and city institutions in framing policies which they can support in order to realise balanced, sustainable and integrated development in core areas of cities.

Sources

Payne G (1998), 'Capturing and communicating what we know: Disseminating research findings', paper presented at the Charney Manor Conference, Oxfordshire


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The guides are also aimed at improving the channels of communication and knowledge transfer between all interest groups to create active partnerships in decision-making for sustainable local urban development.

Thus community-based organisations themselves, and other intermediaries representing the interests of the urban poor, can ensure that the knowledge that is produced and communicated can better reflect their needs. The more informed the poor, the more empowered they are, to initiate and negotiate development changes in their communities that reflect their real needs and concerns.

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Improving Knowledge Transfer in Urban Development
Max Lock Centre
School of the Built Environment
University of Westminster
35 Marylebone Road
London NW1 4LS
United Kingdom

maxlockc@wmin.ac.uk
Tel: +44 20 7911 5000 ext 3120
Fax: +44 20 7911 5171

Max Lock Centre Research Team

William Erickson, Catalina Gandelonesa, Ripin Kalra, Gholam K, Tony Lloyd-Jones, Mark Powy, Dr Michael Theis, Luisa Vallejo

Targeting research knowledge to create partnerships in urban development

Information produced to benefit the Urban Poor does not have to be directed at the poor themselves. There are several groups of actors who can bring about change by acting upon information received by them. Information that requires technical training to be understood and applied should be directed at intermediaries since such information may not be directly usable by the poor.

Interventions in the urban context are invariably complex and involve both active and passive interest groups. Researchers need to gain an understanding of their respective roles and interests in order to determine how knowledge may be best used to benefit the urban poor.

Local development interests are frequently in conflict or competition with one another. The pursuit of interests in a co-operative framework can lead to a “win-win” situation in which all those co-operating can benefit.

The key to achieving partnership in local development is negotiating conflicting interest. Researchers need to understand that achieving a real partnership also depends on ensuring that the weaker partners can negotiate on an equal basis with the stronger ones. Access to knowledge can be the open door to such empowerment.
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Urban development stakeholders, interests, roles, responsibilities, knowledge and communication needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest group</th>
<th>Interests</th>
<th>Roles and responsibilities</th>
<th>Communication/networking needs</th>
<th>Basic knowledge/needs</th>
<th>Related capacity/needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-income households</td>
<td>Security, economic, social well-being and quality of life of individuals. Power relations within families and households may mean that the interest of some individuals is pursued at the cost of others.</td>
<td>Securing immediate and longer term needs of families; acting in common interest of the community and supporting the weakest not at the costs of other individuals or communities.</td>
<td>Clear channels of communication with intermediaries and local government; contact with community networks; access to radio, television, local news media, posters, etc. Language is the main consideration with learning.</td>
<td>Community-based environment knowledge good but easily accessed by interested parties; Need knowledge for self-help; knowledge to empower and negotiate change. Interpersonal discussion is the preferred means of learning.</td>
<td>Basic education/training including community information centres good but not easily accessed by low-income and exchange networks; access to citizens to public information resources. Monitoring to ensure messages are not misinterpreted in the process of local dissemination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-based organisations, citizens’, groups, grassroots organisations</td>
<td>Common neighbour/area-based community or community groups; May fall under the influence of a single dominant individual or be taken over by political organisations. Different organisations may compete to represent a particular local community.</td>
<td>Representing an area-based community or special interest group; contributing to sharing common or special interest group; active communication with journalists and news services.</td>
<td>Good communication links needed with local authorities and other groups for exchange of good practice. Need knowledge of local institutions and development processes.</td>
<td>Good knowledge of the local environment and needs but not at the other interests groups.</td>
<td>Trained, skilled stuff, equipped premises; telephone and telecommunications links.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Government Organisations</td>
<td>Wide range of non-commercial special interests foronal support, charitable work, environmental activism, etc. Some NGOs are basically local but usually national or international. May be active in urban poverty reduction but can also act for selfish individuals.</td>
<td>Active support of NGOs. May have a small presence in particular localities and therefore network links with local interest groups may be poor. NGOs may have the expertise to act as specialist advisors and communities.</td>
<td>National or international NGOs may not have a presence in particular localities and therefore network links with local interest groups may be poor. NGOs may have the expertise to act as specialist advisors and communication.</td>
<td>Access to knowledge in areas of special interest likely to be important. NGOs are a good source of information for NGOs and NGOs.</td>
<td>Good networks of NGOs and NGOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government interests</td>
<td>Public interest in local government may act as power bases for political and business interests. Officials may act in self-interest or be corrupted by local power. Poor communities find it difficult to communicate with local government. Officials often see strong neighbourhood organisations as a threat rather than an opportunity.</td>
<td>Representing the common interest of the electorate against the self-interests of particular groups. Supporting the weaker communities and disadvantaged against the more powerful. Supporting developing processes for sustainable development policies and practice. There is a lack of techniques for local governments to consult with communities over policies and decisions.</td>
<td>Better formal and cause communication with all local interests. Good relations with the local mass media.</td>
<td>Local government has to be good in small communities and understand small communities.</td>
<td>Access to good data on local development issues and the local government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small private enterprise</td>
<td>Local enterprise can be in conflict with larger outside corporate interests. Generally competing but local businesses in communities exist through shared families and common interests.</td>
<td>Local government in developing world cities is in frequent conflict with local government.</td>
<td>Local government in developing world cities is in frequent conflict with city resources.</td>
<td>Generates local wealth and stimulates local economy.</td>
<td>Access to good data on local government.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interests</th>
<th>Roles and responsibilities</th>
<th>Communication/networking needs</th>
<th>Basic knowledge/needs</th>
<th>Related capacity/needs</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>National and public interest</td>
<td>The vehicle for corrupt politicians and/or political business. As with local government, officials may exercise power for self-interest and expediency.</td>
<td>Good communication with local authorities and other groups for exchange of good practice.</td>
<td>Good networks of NGOs and NGOs.</td>
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Donors from developed countries and international development organisations

<table>
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Access to good data on an international level. Monitoring and evaluation is critical. Past practice should inform policy rather than be largely driven by political trends and catchfases. Good practice should be shared. Donors and multilateral organisations need access to local government organisations and local government needs for local government organisations and local government organisations. | Good networks of NGOs and NGOs. | Local government in developing world cities is in frequent conflict with city resources. | Local government in developing world cities is in frequent conflict with city resources. | Access to good data on local government. |

Central government communications capacity to cope with international demands of better governance. Better communication is important between different government sectors, other governmental and with government at the local and provincial level, as well as with civil society organisations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest group</th>
<th>Roles and responsibilities</th>
<th>Communication/ networking needs</th>
<th>Basic knowledge strengths and needs</th>
<th>Related capacity/ resource needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium and large scale private enterprise</strong></td>
<td>Researchers in local universities and professional groups consult private interests become more important partners for development. Local big business may form power bases with formal and informal links and networks involving local political parties and politicians.</td>
<td>Large enterprises need better communication links with representatives of low-income communities, NGOs, and local government officials at the neighbourhood level. Access to knowledge not normally a problem. Large enterprises can benefit from a better understanding of the localities and lives of the poor and how they can have a positive influence on these from which they may also derive benefit.</td>
<td>Self-financing. Large enterprise can benefit from improved capacity in local public or community relations. Advertising by large scale firms a source of direct funding in local improvements such as street lighting, road safety and public health or open space facilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultants, professional groups</strong></td>
<td>Provision of income-earning professional expertise. Consultants may benefit from large-scale public expenditure on development that may not be especially effective in reducing poverty. Technicians and professionals often have an interest in maintaining their status through professional mystique which knowledge sharing undermines.</td>
<td>Consultants need good communication links with donors and governments. Consultants and professionals need to draw on ‘state-of-the-art’ knowledge in urban development. For researchers, it is important not to neglect established but non-academic forms of knowledge dissemination such as manuals and guidelines. The new media – in particular the Internet – are effectively in delivering knowledge in this form.</td>
<td>Consultants are normally dependent on having a developed capacity in knowledge and communication. Public or voluntary sector professionals may lack knowledge-related resources and communication capabilities that would be addressed in strengthening the capacity of the organisations that employ them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local media groups</strong></td>
<td>Mass media is usually run by large-scale private enterprises. Local newspaper, radio, and television stations may be owned by medium size local businesses. Related businesses such as distribution and printing may be small scale. Local power buses often have control of a strong influence over the local media, which can be particularly powerful in shaping attitudes towards the poor. Good ‘jumping off point’ for access to local knowledge. Better knowledge of development issues depends on researchers and other knowledge generators ‘selling’ these issues to the mass media. The advent of cheap, professional quality video can help in this respect.</td>
<td>The local media have a potentially key role in informing the public and making available knowledge that can facilitate positive development and change. A focus on the entertainment value and story can make suspect the factual basis of reporting. However, mass media have a critical role in raising awareness of issues (or burying them) and can point to a more reliable source of in-depth knowledge.</td>
<td>The local media have many capabilities that could be useful to development interest groups in support of the rights of the poor. The development of an independent, publicly minded and socially concerned local media should be supported where possible. Cheap, modern technology makes the development of community-based media more effective.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Local universities and researchers</strong></td>
<td>Academic status can carry weight but academics are generally low-paid and have poor career prospects in developing countries. Local funding of academic research institutions is likely to be limited. A positive involvement in socially-oriented urban development may be tied to obtaining outside sources of funding.</td>
<td>Universities are key institutions for training professionals and technical staff. Local research institutions can have an important role in the collection of data and in local knowledge generation and transfer that can influence urban development policy. They can also have an important advocacy role in supporting low-income communities. National and international networking may be particularly important. Links with local communities and local authorities may be good or poor. Universities may or may not have the expertise to act as specialist communicators.</td>
<td>Good sources of specialised knowledge at the national and regional level. Universities and research organisations in developing countries, as local knowledge leaders, need access to knowledge being generated in other developing countries and developed countries.</td>
<td>The development of local research and local capacity is a critical element for achieving successful urban management and development. The deployment of modern computer-based communications technology is important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universities and research institutions in developing countries</strong></td>
<td>Academic publication provides status and secure income. Researchers and universities have a clear interest in tapping the funding available for international development. This funding is likely to become more knowledge-focused.</td>
<td>Universities have an increasing important role in training professional and academic staff from developing countries. They are important partners for consultants and governments in development at the international, national and local level.</td>
<td>Universities in the developed countries are increasingly important. Researching and academic staff from developing countries increasingly work with local partners in the developing countries. There is an increasing need for specialist communications expertise.</td>
<td>Universities and research institutions have an active capacity-building role. The internal capacity of such institutions for knowledge production, transfer and communications needs to be built up and to make use of the latest technology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Improving communication between potential partners in urban development**

Interventions in the urban context are invariably complex and involve both active and passive interest groups. Guide 1 had set out and described the main interest groups likely to be involved. Though researchers may not be concerned with targeting all such groups, it is important for them to gain an understanding of their respective roles and interests in order to determine how knowledge may be best used to benefit the urban poor. Local development interests are frequently in conflict or competition with one another. If unconstrained, the powerful can easily succeed in asserting their needs over the weak. However, there are usually many ways in which interests can become complementary. The pursuit of interests in a co-operative framework can lead to a ‘win-win’ situation in which all those co-operating can benefit. The key to achieving real partnership in local development is negotiating conflicting interest, discovering overlapping interest and mutually beneficial means of achieving individual interest. However, achieving partnership also depends on ensuring that the weaker partners can negotiate on an equal basis with the stronger ones. Access to knowledge can be the open door to such empowerment.

**Envisaging local development**

Understanding the local context in which development knowledge may be applied is a pre-requisite of deciding how to target potential users. How can researchers or other interested actors do this? Particular knowledge may be intended for the context of a specific development while other types of knowledge can be more general in application, taking the form of broad policy guidelines. In either case, envisaging a specific, or series of specific applications, is a means of deciding how such knowledge may be used to good effect.

Participants may imagine potential local development scenarios in which development knowledge can be applied (ref: Community Planning Handbook?) A development of this approach is a group-based role-playing or a ‘gaming simulation’ exercise. In this type of exercise, individuals or small groups of individuals imagine themselves playing the role of a particular stakeholder or group with an interest in a particular local development scenario. The aim is for each role-player to bargain to achieve their objectives within the context of the others also aiming for their objectives. (ref?)

**Power, trust and knowledge sharing**

The objective of these exercises is to gain an insight into the motivation of stakeholders (both the explicit motives, and those that are un-stated – the hidden agendas), the power relationships between them and how the dissemination and exchange of knowledge can achieve better development outcomes. However, care must be taken that ‘game playing’ does not become a substitution for serious negotiation. Its only real role is to lead to a better understanding of the process through which everyone is involved.

Of particular importance is the sharing of knowledge between the development partners. Situations of conflict generate and thrive on mistrust and negotiation can only work if the participants can learn to trust one another. Sharing knowledge is a key element of this process. If the knowledge proves especially useful and reliable to the recipient, this in turn reinforces their trust in the supplier as a source of information, and the relationship of trust is reinforced.

For the researcher, then, the aim should be to target not only the obvious interest groups, such as low income communities and their representatives, or central and local government, but also to aim at improving communication and knowledge sharing between the wider range of actors and stakeholders. Clearly many of the interest groups listed in Guide 1 will not be primary targets for the dissemination of development-related research knowledge. For these other actors, it needs to be demonstrated how urban poverty reduction can serve their broader interests. In a programme aimed at urban poverty reduction the active participation of any group or organisation suggests a prior acceptance of the aims of such a programme. However, there is a danger that the more powerful stakeholders may cynically exploit development to their own ends.

Equally, many development interventions initiated by a single actor, say a local authority, may involve incidentally and/or intend to benefit a number of interest groups other than the urban poor. In both instances, deploying research knowledge to strengthen the bargaining power of the poorest and weakest and to raise the awareness of other interest groups of their responsibilities in this area will be key. The following diagram is a generalised and simplified view of the factors affecting the different interest groups who may be involved in urban development targeted at improving the conditions of the urban poor. Researchers and stakeholders can use a similar approach in charting such factors in relation to their own particular circumstances.
Improve Knowledge Transfer

These guides are an output of the DFID-funded Urbanisation Knowledge and Research project: Improving Research Knowledge Technical Transfer (9712)

Purpose of the Guides

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All this implies a greater potential capacity on the part of researchers, and pressure on them to respond to demand and to ensure the more rapid dissemination of research knowledge. However, researchers often have limited resources and they may be unfamiliar with the wide range of methods for knowledge transfer or lack the necessary skills and understanding required for good communication.

This set of guides provides a simplified framework for researchers in urban development for developing countries. It will aid researchers in this field in designing effective strategies for communication so that the new knowledge from their research is easily accessible and understood by their target audience. These guides will also help researchers to assess the resource implications of putting such strategies into practice.

Guides in this series

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2. Intermediaries in knowledge transfer and exchange
3. Identifying the appropriate media for communication
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5. Strategies for communication and knowledge exchange: the role of donors
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Max Lock Centre
School of the Built Environment
University of Westminster
35 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5LS
United Kingdom

maxlock@wmin.ac.uk
Tel: +44 20 7911 5000 ext 3120
Fax: +44 20 7911 5173

Max Lock Centre Research Team

William Erickson, Catalina Gandelosnas, Ripin Kalra, Gholam K, Tony Lloyd-Jones, Mark Povey, Dr Michael Theis, Luisa Vallejo

Understand how the urban poor learn and communicate

Understand how the urban poor learn and communicate. The links are weak between the urban poor and researchers, Universities or NGOs providing development information. Poverty in urban areas of developing countries is characterised by the lack of those communication resources that the research community takes for granted. The result is that the poor rarely publish and learn from media that are favoured by the research institutions such as journals, textbooks, Internet and even face-to-face conferences.

The communication resources available to the poor are not uniform. Nor can it be assumed that populations living in close proximity are cohesive communities. However, life in a small geographical area is transparent and proximity ensures that messages travel fast by word of mouth.

Social networks and peers are the main ways in which low-income groups gather new information. Increasingly, however, the mass media have come to play a dominant role in knowledge transfer, providing new information, amplified and often transformed in the normal processes of word-of-mouth communication.

A modern, fast-changing urban setting requires contemporary forms of recording and storing knowledge. NGOs and CBUs have a potentially important role to play in helping communities gather and store existing knowledge, as well as in facilitating access to new information.

The factors that constrain the urban poor in gathering new information or storing existing knowledge also limit their ability to convey their ideas, needs and priorities to others. This suggests once more the important potential role of community representatives and intermediaries such as researchers or local NGOs in getting the views of the poor across.
Understanding how the urban poor learn and communicate

The urban poor can be empowered through improved access to knowledge and better communications with other interest groups. This implies a better understanding of how poor people gather practical information, record and store knowledge of collective value, and convey their ideas and interests to others.

The links between the poor and the researchers, universities or NGOs best placed to provide development information are often weak or non-existent.

The communication resources available to the poor are not uniform and can usefully be mapped from place to place. Additionally, low-income groups are not homogenous in their abilities to access social networks and other informal sources, or the mass media and other more formal knowledge sources. While in general, language and literacy are barriers to learning and communicating, women, children, disabled, elderly and migrants may all have particular constraints on their ability to access common or formal knowledge. Nor can it be assumed that populations living in close proximity are cohesive communities with equal access to information of collective value. However, life in a small geographical area is transparent and proximity ensures that messages travel fast by word of mouth. In this setting, a simple, visible means of communicating like small notice boards can be highly effective.

One of the features of urban poverty in developing countries is the lack of those communication resources that the research community and intermediaries dealing with poor communities take for granted. The poor seldom learn from media that are favoured by researchers such as journals, textbooks, Internet and even face-to-face conferences. Still less do they use them to convey their own needs, experiences and knowledge.

Social networks and peers are the main way in which low-income groups gather new information. Individual face-to-face communication with friends, colleagues, kin, accepted ‘experts’, or other trusted sources, is still probably the most common form of everyday knowledge transfer and exchange for most people, whether or not they are poor. The difference is that the better off and more educated can be directed to more in-depth or extensive knowledge resources, while the worse off and less well educated may largely rely on word-of-mouth that all too often can be subject to rumour, distortion and misunderstanding.

Increasingly, however, the mass media have come to play a dominant role in knowledge transfer, providing new information, amplified and often transformed in the normal processes of word-of-mouth communication. Urban areas offer a wide range of media such as television, radio and newspapers to which the urban poor, unlike those living in rural areas, have more ready access. The very poorest are least likely to have direct access to any mass media. However, the chances are that they live in communities where better off friends or neighbours have a radio, or perhaps a TV both of which generally have free access. The literate can share information published in newspapers that however, have to be bought by someone in the first place.

Other learning resources, such as libraries and the Internet, are likely to be more remote from the experience of the poor. This highlights the critical role of those in regular contact with low-income communities, such as intermediaries from NGOs, and the trained individuals from within the communities themselves or working in community-based organisations. Such individuals are able to access these resources, and to feed any knowledge into a learning process with the communities themselves. Knowledge exchange between communities undergoing similar experiences can also be an effective way of informing and empowering such communities (see case study).

One of the features of urban poverty in developing countries is the lack of those communication resources that the research community and intermediaries dealing with poor communities take for granted. The poor seldom learn from media that are favoured by researchers such as journals, textbooks, Internet and even face-to-face conferences. Still less do they use them to convey their own needs, experiences and knowledge.

Lack of access to learning institutions, the Internet, libraries, learning centres and support groups means that the poor are equally constrained when it comes to storing their existing knowledge. Lack of training, education and literacy, as well as lack of physical resources, will limit documentation and the maintenance of records. In traditional societies with limited literacy and relying mainly on word-of-mouth, storytelling was perhaps the most important way of conveying a community’s collective experience, knowledge and values.

A modern, fast-changing urban setting requires contemporary forms of recording and storing knowledge. Information has largely replaced experience. Literacy is vital, with the ability to write things down being the critical first step towards more sophisticated methods of storing information of value to the community. NGOs and CBOs have a potentially important role to play in helping communities gather and store existing knowledge, as well as in facilitating access to new information. Learning and information resource centres can help in this respect.

The factors that constrain the urban poor in gathering new information or storing existing knowledge also limit their ability to convey their ideas, needs and priorities to others. Low-income communities lack the capacity to document their own condition and therefore their ability to present their case to the authorities. Direct negotiation with officials, through intermediaries and representatives, or collective pressure through protest and demonstrations are the traditional means of overcoming constraints and powerlessness in the formal decision-making processes. However, the more political channels tend to be short term and open to manipulation.

The poor have little access to, or training in the use of media resources through which their views can be documented and communicated to other stakeholders on a regular basis. This suggests once more the important potential role of community representatives and intermediaries such as researchers or local NGOs in getting the views of the poor across.

Community leaders meet, talk, see what each other is doing and begin an education which allows them to explore the lives and situations of people in other communities, and to pick up any ideas which they think could be useful back home. Exchange is the root strategy for education and mobilisation – of the poor and by the poor.

Poverty may be characterised by a lack of access to means for education and raising awareness (learning resources), means to store, organise and consult practical information (memory resources) and means to express, document and feed ideas to decision-makers (response resources).

Exchange visits as a media for collecting and disseminating ideas, Face to Face: Notes from the network on community exchange, Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, Bangkok, 2000

The poor have little access to the media resources that the research community takes for granted. The result is that the poor rarely publish and learn from media that are favoured by the research community and intermediaries dealing with poor communities take for granted. The poor seldom learn from media that are favoured by researchers such as journals, textbooks, Internet and even face-to-face conferences. Still less do they use them to convey their own needs, experiences and knowledge.

The poor have little access to, or training in the use of media resources through which their views can be documented and communicated to other stakeholders on a regular basis. This suggests once more the important potential role of community representatives and intermediaries such as researchers or local NGOs in getting the views of the poor across. Grassroots workers with appropriate technical skills can help communities set up their own forms of media such as newsletters and community radio. Building capacity in these areas may be seen as an intermediate stage in raising the educational level of the urban poor as a whole, and their ability to be recognised as full and equal citizens. Drawing on the knowledge of other communities who have shared similar experiences is a particularly effective way of strengthening the position of poor communities in the decision-making process.

In Villa El Salvador, Peru community members publish and disseminate issues of importance through a local radio, audio-visual shows, theatre and a regular newspaper. The collective memory of the community is recorded in a local museum.


AICHR (2000) ‘Face to Face: Notes from the network on community exchange’ Bangkok
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There is growing awareness that researchers in developed countries need to be more active and imaginative in the dissemination of the development knowledge they produce.

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All this implies a greater potential capacity on the part of researchers, and pressure on them to respond to demand and to ensure the more rapid dissemination of research knowledge. However, researchers often have limited resources and they may be unfamiliar with the wide range of methods for knowledge transfer or lack the necessary skills and understanding required for good communication.

This set of guides provides a simplified framework for researchers in urban development for developing countries. It will aid researchers in this field in designing effective strategies for communication so that the new knowledge from their research is easily accessible and understood by their target audience. These guides will also help researchers to assess the resource implications of putting such strategies into practice. The responsibility of researchers in this process is clear. It extends beyond simply ensuring that the knowledge they produce is accessible to a range of potential users within the shortest possible time.

Communication is a two-way process. Researchers must be capable of responding to both need and demand as presented to them, as well as pursuing their own research interests within an academic or institutional framework.

The guides set out a series of strategies to improve research communication between the researcher and each of the principle interest groups in the urban development process. There is an emphasis on understanding how the poor in urban areas learn and communicate.

The guides are also aimed at improving the channels of communication and knowledge transfer between all interest groups to create active partnerships in decision-making for sustainable local urban development.

Thus community-based organisations themselves, and other intermediaries representing the interest of the urban poor, can ensure that the knowledge that is produced and communicated can better reflect their needs.

The more informed the poor, the more empowered they are, to initiate and negotiate development changes in their communities that reflect their real needs and concerns.

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maxlock@wmin.ac.uk
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Max Lock Centre Research Team
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Intermediaries in knowledge transfer and exchange

Intermediaries can bridge the weak link between community members and technical institutions. The choice and selection of intermediaries will vary from place to place and project to project.

Local intermediaries can be individuals and organisations in direct contact with poor urban communities, involved with them in their development activities and in their negotiations with more powerful stakeholders.

Within the wider context of knowledge transfer, however, many others act as intermediaries in the process of communication between generators and users. Knowledge transfer intermediaries include media organisations such as publishers and knowledge-based organisations such as libraries, educational and technical institutions.

In designing effective knowledge transfer and exchange strategies, researchers need to be aware of the intermediaries at both ends of the chain and the links (and potential links) between them.
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Intermediaries can bridge the weak link between community members and technical institutions. The choice and selection of intermediaries will vary from place to place and project to project. Local intermediaries can be individuals and organisations in direct contact with poor urban communities, involved with them in their development activities and in their negotiations with more powerful stakeholders. Within the wider context of knowledge transfer, however, many others act as intermediaries in the process of communication between generators and users. Knowledge transfer intermediaries include media organisations such as publishers and knowledge-based organisations such as libraries, educational and technical institutions. In designing effective knowledge transfer and exchange strategies, researchers need to be aware of the intermediaries at both ends of the chain and the links (and potential links) between them.

The potential range of intermediaries and their roles is illustrated in the box ‘The View From The Field’ that draws on a survey of development practitioners. The role played by community leaders, local NGOs, ‘social’ professionals and local authorities is highlighted.

Understanding the motives, strengths and weaknesses of these organisations and individuals in relation to their role as intermediaries is important if the most is to be made of their efforts. Identifying how their capacity may be strengthened can be a significant first step in informing low-income communities and improving their communication links with other parties in the decision making process (see also Guides 1 and 2).

**Bridging the weak link**

Intermediaries can bridge the weak link between community members and technical institutions. They may have the proximity to the local context combined with an ability to interpret and conduct technical research to make them ideal partners for UK based researchers. The choice and selection of intermediaries will vary from place to place and project to project.

**Local Intermediaries**

Thus far, in these guides, we have referred to intermediaries in the more political sense of the word, as individuals and organisations in direct contact with poor urban communities, involved with them in their development activities and in their negotiations with more powerful stakeholders. These can we call local intermediaries. Their understanding and proximity to the local context is significant to the process of knowledge transfer.

**Knowledge transfer intermediaries**

Within the wider knowledge transfer context, however, many others act as intermediaries in the process of communication between generators and users. These can be termed knowledge transfer intermediaries and would include media organisations such as publishers and knowledge-based organisations such as libraries, educational and technical institutions. In designing effective knowledge transfer and exchange strategies, researchers need to be aware of the intermediaries at both ends of the chain and the links (and potential links) between them.

Intermediaries perform one or more of the following tasks:

1. Mediate the exchange of information between one or more groups of people
2. Gather and disseminate information sometimes over large distances
3. Interpret technical information so that it is intelligible to users
4. Initiate and support dialogue among stakeholders
5. Transform information into suitable local media
6. Store information for easy access and monitor its use

The first three tasks are common to both local and broader knowledge transfer intermediaries. The last three are particular to local intermediaries who are the focus of this guide. The capacity to function as an intermediary may not need to be developed from scratch. In fact, as the following example suggests, there are established means of ‘scaling up’ the exchange of knowledge at the grassroots level. This is often referred as the weakest link in the research communication process.

**Shelter Forum, Kenya**

“The capacity to disseminate information effectively to targeted audience is an acquired skill and not at all easy to achieve in practice. Additionally in most cases information dissemination from source to ultimate destination involves a number of stages and at each stage there is the potential for error, distortion, delay or inappropriateness. Where such a chain process is involved the quality and usefulness of the information received by the end user would be highly dependent on the capacity of the weakest link. In many cases this weakest link is between the national intermediary level organisation, such as a university or mainstream NGO and the grassroots or field level.

An approach which has been tried to bridge the gap between the intermediary and the grassroots level is through the development of networks of grassroots organisations. One such network is the Shelter Forum, based in Kenya, but incorporating more than 600 grassroots and community-based organisations in East Africa. Although an important aspect of Shelter Forum’s work is to inform members of relevant outputs and activities from around the world, of more significance is the facilitation role the network plays an information exchange between the members and level of feedback from the organisations of the Forum receive on members’ needs and problems, which the Forum can raise at the policy and decision maker’s level.”

Otto Ruskul, Intermediate Technology Development Group

**Strengths and weaknesses**

It is context-specific – community leaders, NGOs, government officers, local referents (e.g. priest, a teacher, a social worker) who could be the best intermediaries according to their commitment and involvement with poor urban communities and/or researchers.

The intermediaries role would be to link both parties, persuading them of the fact that, in development questions, knowledge requires to be built on the basis of contributions from both parties. ‘The Urban Poor’ are the key party of a two-part knowledge exchange. Intermediaries could also help to adjust differences in time and languages (many urban poor have learnt what to say to community outsiders so it is necessary to understand all their languages: verbal, attitudinal).

Ana Hardoy, Argentina

(What they think they want to hear – anything to keep them at bay and at arm’s distance out of their affairs? Ed.)

In (Belize) The most suitable intermediaries are the officers of the social department who should accompany the researchers to compose the veracity of their responsiveness.

Cadet Henderson, Belize

Elected representatives of local communities and popular organisations should be principal intermediaries, followed by local NGOs that have been selected, where possible with the help and consent of the same local organisations.

This form of three- or four-way partnership (development agency-community-NGO-researcher) would go some way towards ensuring (though not guaranteeing) a positive basis for any project undertaken on the part of the communities involved. Unrepresentative NGOs can be counterproductive. Researchers could train local communities to conduct their own research.

David Turner, Ecuador

The benefits from these processes of knowledge transfer through the mediation of intermediary NGOs are of course enhanced by linkages to formal systems. This is on account of the superior access of these bodies to knowledge both from research reports as well as internal documentation. The government departments are better able to promote NGO networks and exchange of knowledge partly because of the poor communication channels among NGOs and partly because of the low resource and professional base of most NGOs. This formal NGO-community networking can be increasingly seen in many of the social sector projects in the cities, and national programmes for women’s development, family welfare, AIDS control, children in difficult circumstances etc.

The Kerala model of participatory planning from below has the unique feature of utilising resource volunteers from the society for transmitting knowledge on resource mapping and planning to the people at ward and city level, and in helping to match priorities to resources. These volunteers are in turn trained to get the basic equipment to assist the people for plan preparation and later local execution of projects.

Dr PSA Sundaram, India

**Sources**

Max Lock Centre (1999), ‘Peer review comments: R7171 improving knowledge transfer’, University of Westminster, London

**Max Lock Centre**
The responsibility of putting such strategies into practice. The responsibility also helps researchers to assess the resource implications of communication. These guides will help researchers to understand how the urban poor learn and communicate. Effective strategies for communication so that the new knowledge from research is easily accessible and to ensure the more rapid dissemination of research knowledge they produce.

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Communication is a two-way process. Researchers must be capable of responding both to need and demand and presented to them, as well as pursuing their own research interests within an academic or institutional framework. The guides set out a series of strategies to improve research communication between the researcher and each of the principal interest groups in the urban development process. There is an emphasis on understanding how the poor in urban areas learn and communicate.

The guides are also aimed at improving the channels of communication and knowledge transfer between all interest groups to create active partnerships in decision-making for sustainable local urban development. Thus community-based organisations themselves, and other intermediaries representing the interest of the urban poor, can ensure that the knowledge that is produced and communicated can better reflect their needs. The more informed the poor, the more empowered they are, to initiate and negotiate development changes in their communities that reflect their real needs and concerns.

Preferences for and availability of media vary from place to place. It is best to ask the target group the media of their preference.

The identification, search and correct use of information are consultative processes. An information service needs to be accessible to all members of the community.

Person to person consultation is the preferred means of getting new information. Having an individual at the user end, who understands the needs for and application of reliable information is important.

Information should be available in a printed form to prevent loss and distortion when passed from person to person. Use of electronic medium to store information and Internet is advisable where available.

Researchers should consider the purposes of different media; the identification of media ‘routes’; ensuring the message is accessible; the nature of available media; the selection of the right media – printed media, broadcasting media, media for giving and receiving; and improving media practice.

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Purposes of different media

Different types of media serve different purposes. The mass media — newspapers, radio, television — often serve to raise awareness of issues without necessarily exploring them in any depth. Journals, reports, books, documentaries and other print, tape or electronic reference materials can provide the in-depth information lacking in more immediate forms of communication. Where such materials are used in formal instruction or consultation, or in a workshop 'knowledge-sharing'.

Nature of Media

‘routes’

What is important to understand are the functions and characteristics of different types of media. And, particular, how these may be used in combination with one another. How the message is ‘routes’ delivered. If the media are used in a tailored way, to reach a particular audience and/or to improve communications between particular groups of people. Due to the involvement of ‘intermediaries’ certain media routes allow less control on the message that is sent out to the user making it open to distortion and interpretation. The more immediate, awareness-raising media should include route-makers to more in-depth, long-term sources of information. Any knowledge transfer and communication strategy should be designed around this ‘cascading’ of knowledge through different types of media, ensuring the message is accessible.

Identifying media

This said, preferences for and availability of media will vary from place to place, and among different social groupings in a particular place. Where knowledge is narrowly targeted at a known user group, they will have been consulted on the media of the preference. The information needs to be accessible to all members of the group concerned. Having an individual at the user end, who understands the needs for and application of reliable information, is important. More often than not, the audience will be more general and researchers should earmark resources for surveying the range of preferences and exploring and utilising the appropriate media to achieve effective knowledge transfer and exchange.

Selecting the right media

There is a wide range of media technologies available, with different opportunities and constraints associated with each of them. There are also many different ways in which such technologies can be used.

Printed media

The printed word can take the form of posters, newspapers, journals and magazines, books, brochures and reports, each with their own characteristics in terms of reach and durability. Similarly the Internet is not one but a multiplicity of media. Such media, in turn, are subdivided into further categories and sub-categories — the printed book into works of fiction and non-fiction, within fiction into the ‘genres’ of detective novel, romantic novel, and so on. Other forms and new capacities are constantly being created and ‘niche’ being tapped.

In practice, most of these forms of communication may not be appropriate for the needs of development researchers and technical factors will reduce the range of choices available. Literacy is important. More often than not, the audience will be more general and researchers should earmark resources for surveying the range of preferences and exploring and utilising the appropriate media to achieve effective knowledge transfer and exchange.

Broadcasting media

In the short-term, and on a ‘one-off’ basis, the broadcast media can be particularly useful for publicity and raising awareness through news items. However, broadcasters can have their own agenda to entertain, to sensationalise or to pursue a particular political bias. Control over the mass media and how it is used by or on behalf of the poor is almost always impossible to achieve. Even socially committed journalists find it difficult to come across opportunities to focus on development issues in mainstream media. Technologies such as video and community-based media resources can help but are likely to be limited in their impact outside the low-income communities themselves.

In projects, target groups, and particularly the poor, may not have direct communication with all stakeholders. They may be able to express themselves better through the use of recorded material, videos and tape recordings providing in the process, research evidence for the researcher as well as documentation of the research process which is easily adaptable into other forms of publication. Networks are useful means to scale up dissemination and information exchange.

Media for giving and receiving

Media should also be considered for its ability to receive as well as deliver information. Access to basic telecommunications is usually very expensive and lacking in poor communities. The telephone remains the most effective person to person form of urban communication whereby information can be received as well as views expressed (providing the caller has access to the essential numbers) and one that the better off take for granted.

Cheap public, shared or commercial facilities accessible to the poor are critical in this respect. Basic postal services are a cheap and reliable form of communication for those with some literacy, providing there is a reliable address book to hand. Good access again may be dependent on communal facilities and local shops. In general, radio has a good reach to the poor but its use as a more sophisticated, interactive channel, through radio talk shows, is likely to be limited through lack of telephone access by the listeners. Enlightened local radio and TV stations may enable poor communities to become involved in producing their own programmes.

Improving media practice

The future availability of research knowledge rests on its access and use by all stakeholders. Researchers can do a great deal by giving appropriate attention and developing sufficient resources to their knowledge sharing and communication strategies. This should be seen not only in the immediate terms of disseminating the knowledge being produced in a particular research project, but also in the longer term aims of developing local capacity and building effective communication networks between stakeholders in development.

However, as Guide 1 indicates, much of the effort needed to turn development knowledge into effective practice for the urban poor to improve their living conditions rests with the capacity building efforts of governments and donors. At a basic level, this can be achieved through improvements in social infrastructure like schools and colleges, libraries, learning centres, and information centres and archives. At another level, it means developing the knowledge and communication capacities of a range of local actors in civil society and local government.
Case study

Asking people how they would like to be informed.

A citizen's jury and a number of discussion groups were organised in East London to get answers to the following question: “How can health information be made available to the residents of East London?”

The residents came up with a number of recommendations.

On access

The information produced must be accessible to all minority groups within East London and thus consider:

- Language
- Cultural appropriateness
- Various literacy levels
- Physical, sensory and mental disabilities
- Other disabilities

On availability

- Leaflet all houses
- Use radio doctor phone-ins to get information to “hard-to-reach groups”
- Use local TV (Asian TV) and local radio generally
- Help-lines must be in speaker's language right from call pick up
- Ensure that there are more one to one information giving points and information can be given in private and in a caring manner.
- Ensure that there is simple and clear information as well as more comprehensive information.

Source: East London and City Health Authority, UK

Characteristics of various media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Potential to reach poorest</th>
<th>Participatory potential</th>
<th>Potential no. of people reached</th>
<th>Potential for distortion of message</th>
<th>Cost effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaflets, news sheets</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal meetings</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio cassettes</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slides</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre/Folk media</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email/Internet</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>★★★</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpreted from: New Economics Foundation, UK

★★★: most likely to be applicable
★★: least likely to be applicable
• Cost
• Time scale involved in preparation and use
• Durability – is information recorded for future use – if so for how long?
• Searchability - possibility to search for and get specific answers
• Special skills required to prepare or to use the media
• One way or interactive channels (duplex or multiplex)
• Size of audience reached
• Type of audience reached
• Possibility of raising awareness
• Possibility to deliver specific detailed information to help solve an individual problem, to initiate an activity or to facilitate decision making
• Possibility to combine short and long-term functions or to relate to other media which cover these functions
• Accessibility, current and future
• Accessibility to equipment, components and systems to send and receive messages
• Potential to access audience that has direct interest in the message
• Possibility to transmit messages across language barriers, to different cultures and for different education levels.
• Possibility to learn and acquire new skills
• Possibility to change attitudes, opinions, perceptions or behaviour
• Possibility to establish dialogue
• Enable two way flow of information
• Local communication capability
• International communication capability
• Possibility to extract and repackage information
• Participation level by various stakeholders
• Procedural, legal and regulatory environments

Source: Intermediate Technology Development Group, UK

Sources

Improving Knowledge Transfer

These guides are an output of the DFID-funded Urbanisation Knowledge and Research project: Improving Research Knowledge Technical Transfer (R717)

6 Strategies for communication and knowledge exchange: the role of UK-based researchers

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There is growing awareness that researchers in developed countries need to be more active and imaginative in the dissemination of the development knowledge they produce.

Technological innovation in communication is giving knowledge producers and communicators an increasing array of media to get their message across to a variety of audiences within a shorter time scale. At the same time, greater ease of communication on a global scale, particularly through the electronic media, is making networking an increasingly large component of research and development practice.

All this implies a greater potential capacity on the part of researchers, and pressure on them to respond to demand and to ensure the more rapid dissemination of research knowledge. However, researchers often have limited resources and they may be unfamiliar with the wide range of methods for knowledge transfer or lack the necessary skills and understanding required for good communication.

This set of guides provides a simplified framework for researchers in urban development for developing countries. It will help researchers in this field in designing effective strategies for communication so that the new knowledge from their research is easily accessible and understood by their target audience. These guides will also help researchers to assess the resource implications of putting such strategies into practice. The responsibility of researchers in this process is clear. It extends beyond simply ensuring that the knowledge they produce is accessible to a range of potential users within the shortest possible time. Communication is a two-way process. Researchers must be capable of responding to both need and demand as presented to them, as well as pursuing their own research interests within an academic or institutional framework.

The guides set out a series of strategies to improve research communication between the researcher and each of the principle interest groups in the urban development process. There is an emphasis on understanding how the poor in urban areas learn and communicate.

The guides are also aimed at improving the channels of communication and knowledge transfer between all interest groups to create active partnerships in decision-making for sustainable local urban development. Thus community-based organisations themselves, and other intermediaries representing the interest of the urban poor, can ensure that the knowledge that is produced and communicated can better reflect their needs. The more informed the poor, the more empowered they are, to initiate and negotiate development changes in their communities that reflect their real needs and concerns.

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Improving Knowledge Transfer in Urban Development
Max Lock Centre
School of the Built Environment
University of Westminster
35 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5LS
United Kingdom

maxlock@wmin.ac.uk
Tel: +44 20 7911 5300 ext 3120
Fax: +44 20 7911 5373

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6

Strategies for communication and knowledge exchange: the role of UK-based researchers

Researchers must have a clear communication strategy in order to gather and deliver research knowledge in the appropriate form and place. Identifying and targeting the potential users of research knowledge in the urban development process is the first step and this is covered in Guide 1. Funding agencies may also expect researchers to contribute to the task of improving communications between stakeholders, in particular to ensure that poor people are better informed, able to convey their needs and influence development decision making. The use of intermediaries should be considered to bridge the communication gap with poor communities or other target groups, who may themselves be intermediaries in the urban development process.

Prompts for a knowledge transfer strategy

As all research projects are unique, the points below merely serve as a prompt for the researchers to design their own communication and knowledge sharing strategies. It is suggested that researchers consider the knowledge transfer issues that are likely to arise at all stages of the research – before, during and after, as outlined below – in drawing up their funding proposals.

Before and in the early stages of research

Identifying the research topic and establishing needs: if research can be linked with community-led development initiatives, so much the better. However, while research may be 'demand-led', in that a developing country partner initiates it, the assessment of its relevance to urban poverty reduction is usually made, if not by the researchers themselves, then by an 'intermediate' rather than by the poor themselves.

Researchers also need to develop their own theoretical interests and the best that can be achieved arises out of a positive dialogue between potential knowledge users and suppliers. The pre-funding period can be a fruitful time for establishing contacts and building networks of future potential knowledge users and sharers.

Designing the research proposal: testing a topic by exploring urban development scenarios in which the knowledge generated could be applied, can usefully be done at the preparatory stage. In this way a thought-through communication and knowledge sharing strategy will be an integral part of the research proposal.

Where the research is specific to a particular place or linked to a specific development initiative, there is a need to establish what use is to be made of the information and by whom. Then communication can be established with the local government, communities, intermediaries and other stakeholders in the place of study.

Researchers need to establish what is the appropriate media to communicate with the target groups. What is the media to be used within the project and beyond, for what purpose and when? (See Guide 4) A closely linked question is the format and mode of expression or type of language to be used in tailoring information to the needs of users?

Any research proposal needs to address the selection criteria of the funding organisation. Currently, in the urban development context, most funders are primarily concerned with poverty-reduction. Researchers will need to demonstrate a poverty focus, or at least clear links between their topic of research and improvements in the conditions and quality of life of the urban poor.

Additionally, funding bodies are increasingly looking towards a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to development. This has implications for research dissemination, which are outlined below.

In designing a research proposal, researchers need to strike a balance between resources devoted to research, and those concerned with communication and knowledge transfer. In practice, there is no clear dividing line between these activities but it is the case that researchers have underestimated the requirement for knowledge transfer-related activities.

During research

While a communication and knowledge sharing strategy will have been planned in outline at the project initiation and design phase, a better understanding of the development processes that the research is concerned with should emerge during the research. As a consequence, the knowledge transfer strategy should be revisited and refined as the research proceeds to ensure better targeting and improved communications.

Where research involves local case studies, there are clearly opportunities for establishing longer-term communication links with communities and other local stakeholders and for targeting research outputs at capacity building in the research locations. Indeed, it should always be kept in mind that the research itself is an important opportunity for building local capacity, expertise and understanding among communities, local researchers and other intermediaries. Participatory research techniques are particularly useful in this respect.

As a rule, research funders are looking for general and strategic applications of research findings. Case studies should therefore be chosen for their general lesson, learning potential rather than any particular local opportunities. This means balancing the constraints of limited funding against the need to cover a range of development scenarios in, for instance, geographical location, cultural and social characteristics, settlement size and type.

Case studies, therefore, are almost certainly not going to cover all the potential applications of the research knowledge. Knowledge transfer strategies will thus need to be designed around this broader potential ‘market’ for the research outputs and generalised audience ‘types’.

Basic questions such as in what language or languages the outputs will be published need to be taken at an early stage, since this can have major implications for limited resources.

Since knowledge transfer strategies are likely to go on evolving during the research itself, the knowledge needs to be stored in a form accessible to different types of dissemination. Different media and locations should be explored to maintain ease of access for potential users.

After research

Since research findings and outputs are concentrated in the final stages of any research project, most active dissemination only occurs at the end of the project and after it is finished. This means that the research programme should include final workshops in which the participants can come together to review the outputs and the knowledge transfer strategy, and plan any active dissemination phase whereby the outputs can form part of a broader capacity-building exercise.

A feedback role should be created that can clearly express the needs of the target groups to promote needs led research and effective knowledge transfer. In principle, feedback and monitoring should be part of the research programme so that they can lead to a later review and evaluation of the research findings and their impacts in practice, improve the methods of knowledge transfer, and help improve the dissemination and understanding for the next project.

In practice, however, funders are unwilling to take on open-ended or long-term resource commitments. This means, if research is to be sustainable, local capacity for undertaking the monitoring, evaluation and feedback role should be developed, if possible, as part of the research programme. This has implications for the way that research proposals are framed and resources programmed.

Resources for disseminating DFID research to overseas researchers

Electronic Media
- Department for International Development web-site: www.dfid.gov.uk
- Internet based: electronic mailing lists
- Using local computer capacity

Mass Media
- Television Trust for the Environment, UK and their international network
- Local Universities
- Local publishers and journals
- Earthscan Publications, UK
- Intermediate Technology Publications, UK
- Environment and Urbanisation Journal, UK
- Internet based: electronic mailing lists
- Urbanisation* newsletter, UK
- Environment and Urbanisation Journal, UK
- Intermediate Technology Publications, UK
- Earthscan Publications, UK
- Local publishers and journals

Printed Media
- University courses in the UK on Urbanisation and Development
- Local Inter-Schools Conference
- Local Conferences

Intermediaries
- DFID field officers
- British Council Division
- Local Universities
- Local NGO and CBO networks
- Local Government

Source: Max Lock Centre
The following table shows why various stakeholders need information and how it may be provided to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who needs access</th>
<th>Reason to disseminate findings</th>
<th>Which findings are needed and why</th>
<th>Methods of dissemination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community members (not directly involved in research project)</td>
<td>Access to urbanisation information</td>
<td>Summary of results to create interest and support in urbanisation</td>
<td>Interpersonal meetings, Local Radio, Newsletters, Posters, Slides, Demonstration (Decide locally)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community members (directly involved in research project)</td>
<td>Take a part in the planning, implementation, monitoring and dissemination</td>
<td>Fuller periodic summary of results so they can continue to have a key involvement</td>
<td>Interpersonal meetings, Study groups, Local Radio, Newsletters, Posters, Slides, Demonstration (Decide locally)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main investigators and staff</td>
<td>Responsibility for project implementation and monitoring community decision making and action</td>
<td>Regular flow of findings to be able to monitor project, make decisions and adjustments, plan programme.</td>
<td>Interpersonal meetings, Study of results, Email update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District and provincial level departments, agencies, organisations</td>
<td>Receive information and/or specified active role. Disseminate lessons learnt. Support future action</td>
<td>Full results or summary only for analysis of lessons learnt and policy decision making</td>
<td>Full report or summary (1-2 pages), Mass media, Interpersonal meetings, Exchange visits, Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National level ministries, agencies, organisations</td>
<td>Receive information. Disseminate lessons. Support future policy and action</td>
<td>Full results or summary only for analysis of lessons learnt and policy making</td>
<td>Summary (1-2 pages), Mass media, Interpersonal meetings, Policy Briefs, Interactive computer presentations, Articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External funding agencies</td>
<td>Receive information. Disseminate lessons. Support future action.</td>
<td>Full results or summary only for analysis of lessons learnt and policy making</td>
<td>Full report plus summary and discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International agencies, UN development agencies</td>
<td>Receive information. Disseminate lessons. Support future action.</td>
<td>Full results or summary only for analysis of lessons learnt and policy making</td>
<td>Probably summary only, Discussions, Presentations at meetings, Articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific community</td>
<td>Receive information and build on research in the design of further activities</td>
<td>Full scientific results</td>
<td>Papers, International and National, Verbal presentations and conferences, Seminars, Articles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Water Engineering Development Centre (WEDC)
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United Kingdom
maxlockc@wmin.ac.uk
Tel: +44 20 7911 5000 ext 3120
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Max Lock Centre Research Team
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Donors have the responsibility for the strategic direction and management of research as well as monitoring its broad impact to determine its usefulness in shaping policy. Improvements can be made in each of these areas of responsibility to ensure more effective research and knowledge transfer.

The knowledge transfer research suggests tasks for donors to improve the transfer of knowledge resulting from the research funded by them.

These tasks are outlined in this guide and should be treated as recommendations for action and subject to internal discussion accordingly.
Tasks for development agencies who are funding research in urban development

1 Consolidate, categorise, disseminate and co-ordinate existing research and expertise

Donors should facilitate the consolidation of urban research knowledge, already within their domain. A recognisable, constantly up-dated and well cross-referenced platform should be set up so that available and new reports can be publicised, especially to field staff. A database of existing and new urbanisation research can be built and made widely available.

Practitioner’s comment

*‘An important set of additional suggestions could relate to the transfer of knowledge among the officials in the DFID itself on different projects of relevance to the urban sector and poverty reduction. With the trend for setting up DFID offices in countries like India and the sporadic interaction of officials from London with field staff of DFID, the knowledge transfer has become diluted, with some impact on the policy-making and project appraisal capacity in London. Equally critical is the lateral transfer of knowledge in projects, such as the techniques of reaching the beneficiaries in education, health, nutrition, rural development, gender development, and municipal development. It is possible to give examples on this from India. The officials are bewildered by conflicting approaches of different field missions, and of their unwillingness to pursue successful strategies in UK assisted and other donor-assisted projects in the same sector. Institutional memory appears to be a problem still with most donors. This is an issue now being addressed by the World Bank, but even they are not reaching out to access the knowledge of other donors in the same country. OECD’s Internet page is an excellent illustration of linked databases.’*

PSA Sundaram, formerly Indian Administrative Services

2. Co-ordinate and consolidate networking resources

More effort should be made to co-ordinate research efforts (both within and between donor organisations) and to share existing urban research knowledge. Greater use could be made of United Nations and other inter-governmental organisations in this respect, as well as supporting the development of linked databases, regional research networks and ‘anchor’ institutions that can help in this role. Related work that is going on within existing web-based resources like NIS Research network and NAURUS should be recognised.

A single co-ordinating body should be considered with responsibility for creating and maintaining a database with suitable levels and means of accessibility, founded on sound urban research findings and practice. It should play a pro-active role in identifying gaps in knowledge at all levels and filling them. The aim should be to build up for DFID a world-wide reputation for sound, practical and accessible information and advice available to all those working in the field of alleviating urban poverty. The interactive, participatory and continuity of updating and monitoring of this knowledge facility should be stressed.

Max Lock Centre, Recommendations to DFID 1999

3 Commission innovative media use to facilitate awareness and publication of research available

Use should be made of the Internet and other media for promotion and distribution based on a clear understanding of how these media are used, who accesses them and how effective this is. Where possible, current research available in digital form should be placed on the web. The donors’ current dissemination media such as the newsletters and web-sites need periodic and in-depth review to establish their usefulness and ways of making them more effective.

4 Promote and test tools for knowledge transfer

Donors should promote further research into communication and knowledge sharing particularly in monitoring, evaluation, relevant tools and arriving at outputs.

Continuing research is required into developing an understanding of knowledge transfer. Collaboration with other bodies working on this subject should be encouraged. Much of the knowledge is new and several pilots are ongoing and their results not yet published. These should be a means for researchers to update themselves on the state of the art in knowledge transfer and how this is reflected in the process of research application. This will encourage researchers to build their capacity rather than become outdated.

Relevant research projects funded under the DFID Urbanisation Knowledge and Research Programme include Community Sustainable Development Indicators (R7233), Community Learning Information

Communication (CLIC) (R7234), Building Municipal Capacity for Community Participation (R6662) and Research Knowledge Technical Transfer Programme (R7170) – of which these guides are an output.

5 Formalise the requirement for knowledge transfer strategies in research applications

Researchers should be expected to propose a programme within each project for the research knowledge transfer process (which includes dissemination) and a basis for further study of its impact. This should be informed by an understanding of the communication environment in which this process takes place. Relevant guides from this series and other background information could be included in the information pack for researchers and updated on a yearly basis.

6 Build capacity at all levels and share ideas with researchers and practitioners to improve knowledge transfer and communication

The lesson of Guides 1 and 2 is the need to build capacity at all levels, and among all groups with an interest in urban development, especially among intermediaries. These would include local governments and research institutions, NGOs and CBOs in order to improve the communication environment, and the potential for knowledge sharing and empowerment of poor people. At present, this capacity building is taking place in a rather ad hoc way. In some cases, it may be demand-led but a more co-ordinated and strategic approach among donors needs to be developed.

Additionally, researchers in developed countries need more skills and resources to meet the demands of effective strategies for research knowledge transfer. Donors should provide a clear message to researchers about the benefits of developing such strategies and about the incentives and resources it is willing to make available for the researchers to achieve them. This includes encouraging researchers to identify the recipients of the research and how people and local governments access information, learn new ideas, share their knowledge and express themselves.

Researcher’s comment

*I believe there is still some conflict between DFID’s predilection of research themes and local determination of needs: your own suggestion for 2 way exchange of knowledge has implications for funders and the process of application and approval. Long term partnerships are at odds with a 3-4 year funding cycle.*

Lucky Lowe, Intermediate Technology Development Group

7 Strategies for communication and knowledge exchange: the role of UK-based donors

Donors have the responsibility for the strategic direction and management of research as well as monitoring its broad impact to determine its usefulness in shaping policy. Improvements can be made in each of these areas of responsibility to ensure more effective research and knowledge transfer. The knowledge transfer research suggests tasks for donors to improve the transfer of knowledge resulting from the research funded by them. These tasks are outlined in this guide and should be treated as recommendations for action and subject to internal discussion accordingly.

The knowledge transfer research suggests the following tasks for donors to improve the transfer of knowledge resulting from the research funded by them. This guide should be treated as recommendations for action and subject to internal discussion accordingly.
Donors should issue co-ordinated guidelines and publicise examples of good practice and innovative use of media and models of knowledge transfer for raising awareness of demand for and effective transmission of research knowledge in urban development.

Tests should be developed and conducted for the most effective measurement of research transfer based on work undertaken in the past and currently, to inform the work in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators: Relevant example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measuring what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Expanded public and private dialogue and debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Increased accuracy of information that people share in the dialogue/debate</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 The means available that enable people/communities to feed their voices into debate and dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Increased leadership and agenda-setting role by</td>
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There should be further research into the role of local governments and their policies and practices in the transfer of urban research. Our research has shown that they have a particularly important role to play. Indicators should be developed to ensure that this role is properly assessed. Local governments may be the most effective agents for communicating knowledge to the poor. DFID should encourage more spending on projects such as information-related infrastructure, rapid dissemination of good practices and training in all processes of knowledge transfer.

As a development agency concerned with poverty alleviation and empowerment of the poor, DFID should be concerned with issues such as right to information (although UK has a long way to go on this). The means to disseminate information, contacts and experience within the country concerned and changes to local policies and practices which could improve the situation. DFID should also review, on a selective basis, the policies and practices of information and knowledge dissemination of the country's government.

Relevant Peer review: Right to information

David Williams, formerly World Bank: DFID should integrate its programmes with ongoing initiatives in the South.

Kevin Taylor, GHK: DFID should also review, on a selective basis, the policies and practices of information and knowledge dissemination of the country's government.

Max Lock Centre (1999), 'R717 Improving Knowledge Transfer' University of Westminster, London

Rockefeller Centre (1999), 'Communication for social change', New York

Sources
These guides are an output of the DFID-funded Urbanisation Knowledge and Research project: Improving Research Knowledge Technical Transfer (R717)

Goals in this series
1. Identifying the users of development knowledge
2. Improving communication between potential partners in urban development
3. Understanding how the urban poor learn and communicate
4. Intermediaries in knowledge transfer and exchange
5. Identifying the appropriate media for communication
6. Strategies for communication and knowledge exchange: the role of researchers in developing countries
7. Strategies for communication and knowledge exchange: the role of donors
8. Strategies for communication and knowledge exchange: the role of local intermediaries

Further Guides in this series are in preparation

Purpose of the Guides
There is growing awareness that researchers in developed countries need to be more active and imaginative in the dissemination of the development knowledge they produce.

Technological innovation in communication is giving knowledge producers and communicators an increasing array of media to get their message across to a variety of audiences within a shorter time scale. At the same time, greater ease of communication on a global scale, particularly through the electronic media, is making networking an increasingly large component of research and development practice.

All this implies a greater potential capacity on the part of researchers, and pressure on them to respond to demand and to ensure the more rapid dissemination of research knowledge. However, researchers often have limited resources and they may be unfamiliar with the wide range of methods for knowledge transfer or lack the necessary skills and understanding required for good communication.

This set of guides provides a simplified framework for researchers in urban development for developing countries. It will aid researchers in this field in designing effective strategies for communication so that the new knowledge from their research is easily accessible and understood by their target audience. These guides will also help researchers to assess the resource implications of putting such strategies into practice. The responsibility of researchers in this process is clear. It extends beyond simply ensuring that the knowledge they produce is accessible to a range of potential users within the shortest possible time.

Communication is a two-way process. Researchers must be capable of responding to both need and demand as presented to them, as well as pursuing their own research interests within an academic or institutional framework.

The guides set out a series of strategies to improve research communication between the researcher and each of the principal interest groups in the urban development process. There is an emphasis on understanding how the poor in urban areas learn and communicate.

The guides are also aimed at improving the channels of communication and knowledge transfer between all interest groups to create active partnerships in decision-making for sustainable local urban development.

Thus community-based organisations themselves, and other intermediaries representing the interest of the urban poor, can ensure that the knowledge that is produced and communicated can better reflect their needs. The more informed the poor, the more empowered they are, to initiate and negotiate development changes in their communities that reflect their real needs and concerns.

Feedback
If you have any comments about the content and presentation and on how it may be improved or if you simply wish to join our mailing list, please contact:
Improving Knowledge Transfer in Urban Development
Max Lock Centre
School of the Built Environment
University of Westminster
35 Marylebone Road
London W1N 5LS
United Kingdom
maxlockc@wmin.ac.uk
Tel: +44 20 7911 5000 ext 3120
Fax: +44 20 7911 5171

Max Lock Centre Research Team
William Erickson, Catalina Gandelsonas, Ripin Kalra, Gholam K, Tony Lloyd-Jones, Mark Povey, Dr Michael Theis, Luisa Vallejo

Local intermediaries are responsible for creating an appropriate environment for the exchange and access of ideas and technical information.

These may range from social and physical infrastructure for building basic literacy and communication to more sophisticated programmes and projects related to capacity building.

The scope of interventions that local intermediaries can make is set out here.
Local intermediaries (see Guide 3) are responsible for creating an appropriate environment for the exchange and access of ideas and technical information. These may range from social and physical infrastructure for building basic literacy and communication to more sophisticated programmes and projects related to capacity building. The scope of interventions that local intermediaries can make is set out here.

Three case studies would work quite well in this context:
1 'Honey Bee Network' India
2 ‘Cultural Mapping’ Columbia (Luise has the text)
3 ‘Tools for community regeneration’ UK (Could John Turner be asked to provide a brief introduction)

1 Gather local knowledge
by understanding, promoting and supporting local initiatives to provide social infrastructure like advice, information and learning centres and helplines.

2 Promote and support community media, knowledge sharing and networking
by providing technical expertise to help communities to make their own publications, recordings and programmes and form networks and federations to share experience.

3 Network and undertake knowledge sharing experience with peers
by publishing their experience and providing feedback and acknowledgement to those that have provided ideas.

4 Ensure participatory planning and strategy making
by encouraging citizens to participate in new development and redevelopment and pay special attention to improving the participation of marginalised groups.

5 Promote public initiatives
by enabling communities to develop such programmes and projects.

6 Appraise periodically resources and skills available to do the tasks above
by monitoring, auditing and improving all aspects of knowledge transfer ensuring its effectiveness at all levels and in all directions.

7 Initiate or support specialist programmes and infrastructure for knowledge transfer
such as training courses and urban neighbourhood centres providing easy access to specialist information, technical advice, equipment, tools and materials.

8 Prepare guidebooks and manuals on urban services and processes
by making it easier for people to understand processes and procedures for physical urban improvement.

9 Keep their own organisations informed of good practice
by training staff And identifying clear sources for updated and reliable information for staff to use and practice.

10 Additional capacity building
by training volunteers to participate in the development of knowledge-related programmes.