

Strategic Communication in PRSP

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I. Introduction

A fundamental principle of the PRSP process is that it is 'country-driven', encourages broad public participation and debate and seeks to create a high degree of ownership among various stakeholders. The process is also 'partnership-oriented', encouraging coordinated participation of all development partners. Both these aspects of PRSP deal with two major issues – inclusion and expression. Inclusion brings stakeholders (government and non-government, local and international) into the PRSP process, while expression solicits stakeholders' views and opinions about the most important development issues they face. The successful involvement of stakeholders will ensure effective ownership, participation and accountability in both PRSP preparation and in its implementation.

How do you ensure genuine participation? The strategic use of communication tools can help ensure this process of inclusion by sharing knowledge and ideas and by enhancing the potential for informed debate and feedback at all levels of society. An individual's or a group's interest in participating in the process is triggered by the sharing of knowledge and information. The amount of feedback they generate will be a measure of the success of communication and, in turn, of participation.

Participation, the keystone of PRSPs, relies on accurate, consistent and continuous communication that provokes response and encourages debate. Any communication intervention -- whether it is a radio program with a phone-in component, or a debate with members of the press -- should always inspire the audience to engage in dialogue. Dialogue invariably leads to better understanding, the application of issues to one's own circumstances and participation in all phases of a PRSP.

What is strategic communication?

Strategic communication is much more than merely disseminating information to people to inform them about the PRSP. It is the active solicitation of their perspective to help consider options to shape the formulation of policy, ensuring that the mechanisms are in place for a two-way flow of information and to build consensus among stakeholders about the development agenda.

In order to ensure a two-way flow of information, it is necessary to take into account both internal and external factors that influence human communication. Internal factors include various human aspects such as culture, psychology, behavior and attitudes, while external factors include various technological or non-technological vehicles such as print and broadcast media, information and communications technology (ICT), folk media, and interpersonal, face-to-face or group communication.

Culture, language, attitude and behavior

Each country has its own cultural and socio-economic dynamics, often involving several sub-cultures and languages. People have different attitudes and behavior patterns, as well as different styles of interaction, interpersonal communication and reactions in group settings. This is particularly important in PRSP communication because it includes considerable information sharing at various levels of society.

It is essential for the PRSP preparation team in the country to understand and analyze people's attitudes and behavior towards the institutions directly or indirectly involved in the country's development process. These institutions include government and non-government institutions, and local, international, political or social groups. The level of the population's trust in those institutions and their expectations should also be explored carefully during the development of PRSP communication strategy. These are factors that help develop appropriate messages, identify the right channel or vehicle to deliver these messages and gather feedback in effective and meaningful ways so it can be used in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction strategies.

Language is another important issue to be considered in the process of developing a PRSP communication strategy to achieve informed public debate. Relevant information or messages should be translated into the local language so that they can be understood by people on their own terms at all levels, from village communities to urban areas.

What is the role of strategic communication in PRSP?

Communication is essential for the active participation of all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a PRSP throughout its various phases: from poverty analysis to development of policy, and financing to monitoring (Figure 1). Communication methods should be used to create an open and inclusive national dialogue to mobilize public opinion around the PRSP. To move from a situation where a largely uninformed and apathetic citizenry becomes committed to the PRSP and backs the process involves deliberate and specific communication programs and strategies.

Accountability, ownership, and participation depend on good communication. This can only be achieved if the communication process carries out its role fully and effectively. The essential roles of communication within such a participatory approach are as follows:

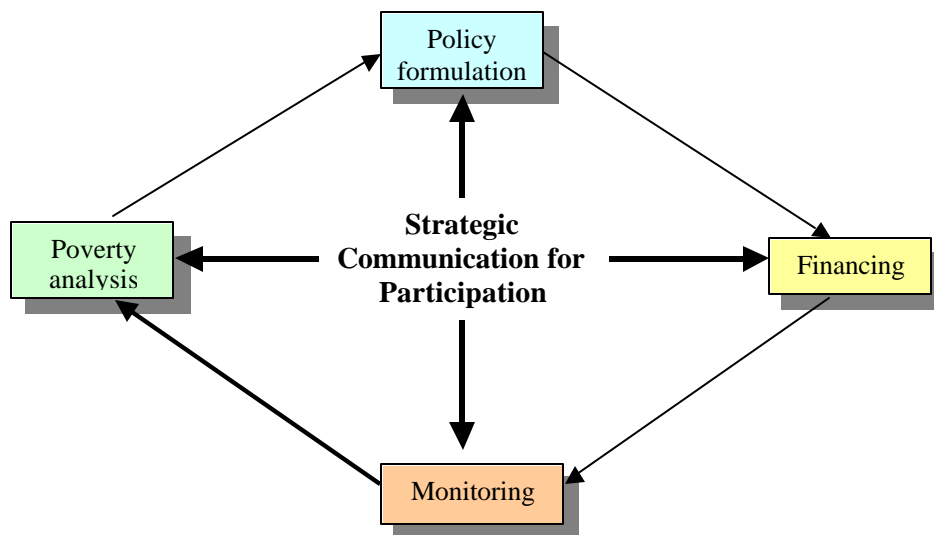
1. To create awareness of PRSPs and explain the underlying principles

Stakeholders such as government agencies, civil society, academia, the private sector, and people in general must be aware of the principles of the PRSP approach and that it is a continuing process that requires their input. During the PRSP process they must

identify their specific needs, understand how policy will be formed to address those needs, the level, distribution and length of financing and how progress will be monitored and achievements evaluated. The potential for change and the ownership (participation and decision making) can only be transmitted to audiences if it is communicated in messages they understand, through channels they trust, in the context of their own surroundings and within spheres they perceive as being able to influence.

Many stakeholder groups will assume that the process of formulating or implementing an initiative like the PRSP is very technical and difficult to comprehend, or that it is irrelevant. Effective communication can

Figure 1: Communication throughout all phases of PRSP



help simplify and demystify this assumption so that people at all levels can understand the issues and process and thus feel empowered to participate.

2. To create a communication environment

Clear and precise communication leads to accountability and transparency. In dialogue between government, local authorities and stakeholders, the more information is shared, the more participation and dialogue are encouraged, the more accountable those in power become and the more transparent their actions must be. Stakeholders must receive, through various channels of communication, not only the messages of PRSP content and the invitation to engage in dialogue, but also the underlying message that their participation is essential to the process. The outcome of any PRSP should be perceived by the population as the result of a national effort, rather than coming from the government.

In many countries, there is a great distrust of government, of local authorities and of big business as well as of international agencies. A flow of effective and open communication helps create and nurture an environment of trust (see Niger case example, Box 1). The interests of those most often previously exploited must be put at the forefront and communication made more transparent. It may be difficult for sectors of the community to assert themselves unless they see such transparency or the effort to create it by PRSP administrators, the media and spokespersons.

Communication can only be effective and have the momentum to move into another level or network of audience if those first contacted embrace the information and pass it on to others. If the vehicle for information is owned, administered and emotionally made part of the community, the message(s) will gain added momentum and be sustained.

PRSP communication should establish channels for feedback and monitoring. Open debate at all levels will promote participation and facilitate monitoring and the evaluation of progress, especially during the implementation of the PRSP.

Box 1: Rationale for designing a strategic communication plan for the preparation of a PRSP in Niger

The various programs that had preceded the PRSP had limited impact. This was mainly attributable to:

- ❖ the absence of a dialogue or consultations between the various stakeholders (the State, civil society, representative assemblies, the private sector, the academic sector, the media, political parties, religious groups, traditional bodies, the general public, development partners, etc.)
- ❖ lack of attainment of the objectives laid down in the different development programs
- ❖ the rejection of these programs because they were misunderstood and did not necessarily take into account the actual priorities of the target groups
- ❖ the fact that the programs seemed to have been imposed by the donors together with national authorities and central technocrats
- ❖ people lost confidence in their leaders because of a lack of transparency in the conduct of public affairs.
- ❖ Taking into account these past experiences it is felt, when drafting the PRSP, that adopting a new approach to development is essential where all the stakeholders will actually be involved and made aware of their responsibilities through an intensive and ongoing strategic communication program.

Source: Paul Dossou-Yovo, Niger Country Office, World Bank, and Aissata Fall Bagna , Member of the PRSP Permanent Secretariat, Niger.

See Technical Note on Niger: Using Strategic Communication in PRSP

Establishing knowledge and information sharing mechanisms is another essential aspect of an effective communication strategy for PRSPs. The more creative the networking and the more it is established on the basis of the stakeholder's need for information, the more successful it will be in relaying the message. Databases, the Internet and academic institutes are not attainable for many communities, but the coordination of networks developed by outside agencies (NGOs, for example) can greatly facilitate information sharing.

3. To create momentum and reinforce the continuity of the PRSP process

Appropriate communication in the most easily understood format and language creates dialogue, comprehension and curiosity to know more, as well as creating the circumstances for further transmission. Ideally effective communication takes place from

the outset of the PRSP process to create the momentum to carry interest and involvement forward and into the future development of the program.

Effective communication about the PRSP process and the outcomes of each consecutive phase will move the effort from one phase to the next. Communication interventions in PRSP should include the dissemination and sharing of information about the achievement of specific goals and targets, whether locally, or nationally, over an extended period of time. The process not only initiates dialogue and debate, but evolves to keep an audience which is itself learning and growing in knowledge and experience, both interested and motivated.

4. To use the watchdog role of the media

The media play an essential role both in the process of formulation and implementation of PRSP. The media has two major roles in the process. On one hand, different media channels are used as vehicles of information dissemination and sharing to create the momentum for PRSP information. They are the agents that must be convinced, provided with information on an ongoing basis and encouraged to focus on the PRSP process and the achievements of the stakeholder community. On the other hand media can play a very crucial role in monitoring the outcomes of the PRSP during implementation.

5. To manage expectations

Not all targets and outcomes will be achieved, and the level of expectation of the population must be managed. If stakeholders are involved throughout the process, if they debate issues concerning policy or financing, they will understand how their situation was assessed (poverty analysis), what major changes were to be made throughout the country (policy formulation), where the money was to come from and how much (financing) and they will then be able to assess (particularly in comparison with similar communities) the degree of success they have achieved. Such involvement cannot help but create more realistic expectations of achievement.

II. Developing a national PRSP communication strategy

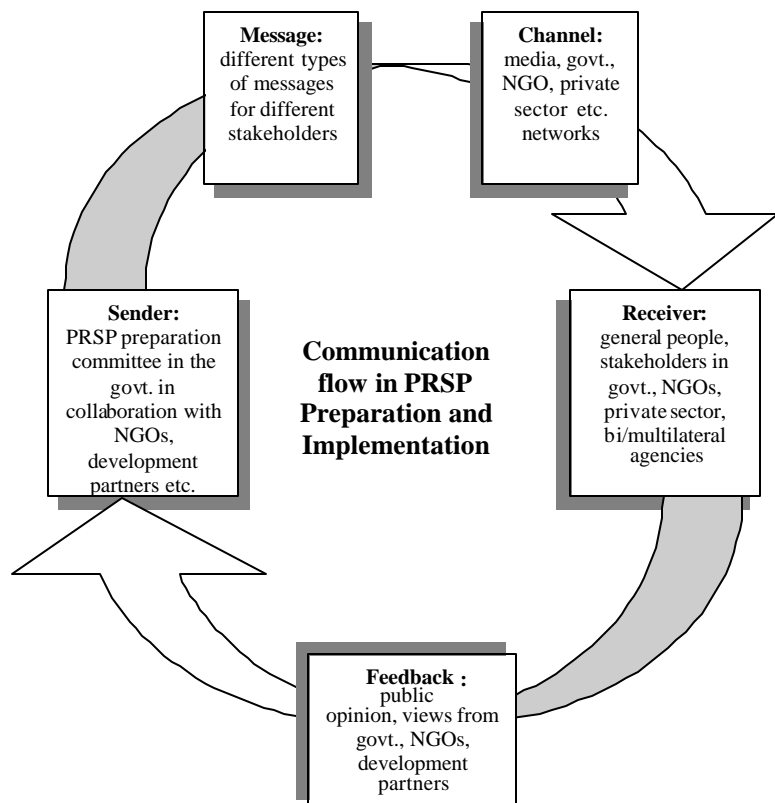
The communication links between individuals and issues, as well as their actions, and reactions, to the PRSP are multidimensional. Communication with the aim to ensure participation of various stakeholders and to establish ownership and partnership flows in several directions. Thus, the communication process for the formulation and implementation of PRSPs involves several levels of people with various requirements and interests. Relevant factors include literacy levels, socio-economic status, attitudinal and cultural factors, whether stakeholders are government or non-government, elected representatives, bilateral or multilateral agencies, the private sector, and the wider public. Within each group there are several layers as well. For example, within the government there are departments dealing directly with the formulation of PRSPs, but there may be several other line departments involved in the implementation of the PRSPs. Specialized groups within the government will also have a perception and a stake in the PRSP, such as technical experts or staff who deal with policy related issues.

The channels will be different for each of these groups, the form of the message will be different, and the communication products will also be different. Some issues will require simple information

dissemination using mass media channels; other issues will require information sharing and consultation through workshops, seminars, brain-storming or policy meetings. This will help different stakeholders to understand the process and issues so that they can participate in the dialogue and debate throughout the process of PRSP preparation and implementation.

- ❑ **PRSP communication: a circular process**
The use of communication tools and concepts in the preparation and implementation of the PRSP can be viewed as a

Figure 2: Communication flow in PRSP preparation and implementation



circular process (Figure 2). This circular process can ensure natural inclusion and public opinion leading to ownership by creating public debate to incorporate public opinion in the preparation and feedback of people’s views throughout the implementation of PRSPs.

General awareness of the PRSP should begin with a combination of official channels (government and its employees), professional media channels (the media who will send the message on to their audiences) and a selection of expert/professional/academic/ channels which should include spokespeople/opinion formers from marginalized groups.

The rest of this chapter sets out nine steps in developing a national PRSP communication strategy.

1. Setting objectives

The development of a national communication strategy for PRSP should begin with a set of clear objectives preferably with short, medium and long term goals. Such objectives facilitate the proper use of the communication tools and concepts, establish the time frame required, and the resources needed to solicit useful inputs to the PRSP process. A comprehensive strategy sets the objectives for both formulation and the implementation of PRSPs.

Figure 3: PRSP communication: steps to consider

Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set objectives for short, medium, long term
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define activities for information sharing and dissemination • Set goals for each activity • Define timings, budget and responsibility
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select audience groups; understand their interest, advantage and disadvantage • Analyze their status, education and position
Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop group-specific messages
Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify existing networks • Understand the dynamics of the networks
Channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the existing channels at national, regional, local level • Identify the accessibility
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate feedback to the PRSP
Costing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish existing and required capacity for human and financial resources

2. Conducting research

The next step is to carry out research on issues such as existing communication media and their capabilities, basic socio-economic facts about the different stakeholder groups, cultural and political dynamics, the governments' existing plan for poverty reduction, the public's views about the existing programs, etc. The data can be collected from both primary and secondary sources (opinion research, research carried out in the country by local, regional or international agencies, academic or research institutions).

Collecting this information will help identify the various stakeholders and their interests, to better understand the existing communication channels and the communication capacity within the country, as well as the relationships between actors within and outside the country.

3. Defining activities

Since the PRSP process is country driven and partnership oriented it involves various groups of stakeholders at different levels including the wider public, government, civil society, bilateral and multilateral agencies etc. In order to ensure proper participation and a two-way process of information flow, a good communication program for PRSP defines different activities. Each activity should be targeted for each audience group with different messages and channels to achieve specific goals (see Vietnam case example, Box 2). These activities might include consultation workshops, radio programs, documentaries on television, brochures or community level interaction.

At this stage it is important to focus on several other important factors such as timing for each activity, institutional arrangements and financial and human resources.

□ **Timing to establish momentum**

Setting a timeline for each activity is essential to use the expected feedback or results, to encourage debate and to establish momentum for the PRSP process. Creating momentum so that participation is achieved is one of the prime purposes of the communication plan. The creation of awareness of the PRSP, debate about its principles and involvement in its progress can only be carried out by creating a continuing flow of information with ample opportunity for debate.

When are the best times for providing information? - when a PRSP is started or a new phase of its activity is initiated are obvious time spots for informing the population. Consider the activities and circumstances of the population: messages are more likely to be ignored or not heard during religious holidays, and certain sectors of society, particularly the agricultural sector, will be difficult to reach during certain seasons (monsoon, harvest).

The Communication Plan should be consistent but ever-changing. The audience will increase its knowledge of the principles and process, but any major outside factors (such as natural disaster) will obviously require adjustments to plans.

If at all possible, communication should move from the central, to the regional to the local levels as quickly as possible. The socially excluded and isolated rural communities will feel even more excluded if too much time elapses before they hear about the PRSP. The more quickly response and debate are initiated, the more successful the participatory process will be.

When initiating debate (in the media, among elements of civil society, through NGOs), ensure that time is made available for the public to respond and register their remarks. It has been noted that so little time is often left for consideration, debate and feedback, that the population feels it is merely rubber-stamping a program that has already been agreed.

Box 2: Vietnam PRSP communication

A number of activities, tools and mechanisms were particularly worthwhile in disseminating information effectively, but the success of these activities depended on the detail of *how* they were done. The following are some examples of what worked well.

Circulating drafts of the CPRGS for comments – The Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS) was written in Vietnamese and was constantly being updated (in the Vietnamese version) to take account of comments. The drafts were available electronically as well as in hard copy, and thus could be circulated rapidly to audiences outside Hanoi. Various versions were also posted on websites, including that of the Vietnam Development and Information Center (VDIC). The CPRGS was translated into English at several points to allow a non-Vietnamese audience to make comments.

Good interaction between various stakeholders allowed commentators to make “joint” comments which had the weight of several organizations or institutions behind them (for example, organizations working on HIV/AIDS came together to draft shared comments which influenced the final draft). Many organizations worked with sectoral government counterparts to establish a process which would allow credible submissions to the drafting team which had broad-based support from the sector. For example, SC-UK supported the child protection agency to develop a response to the penultimate draft of the CPRGS and FAO and the World Bank supported a process in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) to generate cross-departmental response to the drafts.

Meetings and consultation workshops – MPI estimate that more than 500 officials (plus representatives of NGOs) were involved in the series of meetings and consultations held at national and sub-national levels. These generated very spirited debate and very specific feedback on the proposed measures. In addition, the regional workshops were extremely important in building links between national and sub-national levels of government and laying the building blocks for future implementation of the CPRGS – much of which will lie in the hands of local levels of Government. They also provided an important mechanism for bringing the findings of the community consultations into the mainstream discussions about the shape and content of the CPRGS. The planning of these regional meetings was quite time-consuming, but resulted in valuable debate and discussions. Arranging the agenda so that officials could break into small discussion groups with well-chosen facilitators and structured questions to address was important. Putting the findings of the community consultations early on in the agenda provoked responses from the officials and broadened the discussion. National and regional workshops were broadcast on national and local TV stations which have considerable outreach.

Community level consultations – selected communities were involved in intensive discussions on the proposals included in the draft CPRGS. This work used the interim-PRSP as a starting point for communication with poor communities and households. Using a government strategic document as a tool for communication with poor households was a real challenge and the research framework took months to develop with the teams leading the consultations. This involved simplifying the policy messages and proposed public actions contained in the draft CPRGS into clear language that was understandable outside government. It then involved presenting these proposals in a way which related to life in the village and which allowed the participants to give feedback on what would work – or would not work – well in their own communities and to prioritize the proposed interventions. Different communication tools were used in the various sites of the research, but techniques using cards for capturing and ranking ideas were particularly successful.

Following approval, the Government planned a massive effort to disseminate the final strategy to all stakeholders. This was to take the form of different kinds of information for different audiences – perhaps simple pamphlets for spreading awareness at the commune level and more complex, implementation-oriented documents for provincial governments. The Government also needed to consider how information which monitors progress against the commitments made in the CPRGS would be publicized and used.

Source: Carrie Turk, Vietnam Country Office, World Bank.
See *Technical Notes on Vietnam CPRGS Communication*

□ **Institutional arrangements**

The communication function attached to the PRSP must be clearly identified within the PRSP organizational chart. The person(s) responsible for implementing the communication strategy must be identified, the related staff and budget specified. Clear Terms of Reference must be drawn up, with time lines for communication and methods for monitoring effectiveness. Such a structure should be sustainable throughout the life of the PRSP process.

If a national NGO with the appropriate network and capability is available, using its contacts, local offices and resources may be the best way of reaching the wider population, explaining the PRSP and provoking debate and feedback. In Kenya, a large countrywide consultation as organized by an independent NGO partner involving 60,000 people through dozens of consultation workshops.¹

Generally, the PRSP team led by the government would include several committees to address different issues for the PRSP. One of these groups should design and implement the communication strategy. This group might include communication professionals from government and non-government bodies including media, civil society groups and academics. In some cases there might be a need for hiring communication consultant(s) to help design or implement the communication strategy. Consultants can be contracted to carry out specific activities or to help produce communication materials.

¹ The Panos Institute. *Reducing Poverty: is the World Bank's strategy working?*, Report No. 45 (London: 2002), page 26

4. Identifying the audience

Selecting the audience and understanding their interests, advantages and capabilities in order to disseminate or share information is essential for designing a communication plan. The development of messages and their effectiveness in reaching different stakeholder groups depends largely on the selection of the target audience². However, the type of audience varies and the channels or form of communication vehicles to reach it change as well. For example: the target audience for using mass media channels is different from the audience in a consultative meeting with NGOs or a particular government department.

□ Who are they?

- a. those who have the greatest capability for further transmission: the media, civil society (NGOs, academics, institutes, think tanks)
- b. those who need to understand the principles themselves: government officials at all levels
- c. those who need to be open to the principles of PRSP, contribute to its development and sustain the process: NGOs, international organizations working within the country, aid organizations
- d. major opinion formers throughout society: religious leaders, union leaders, school heads etc.

□ How to reach them?

Media should be briefed on a regular basis on PRSP; not just during press conferences but using vehicles that provoke response and encourage debate. They in turn can provide newspaper editorials and columns that invite letters of response. Radio programs are most effective if they have a phone-in component. Initial vehicles should be workshops and seminars that involve all the media, providing them with background and building their capacity in PRSP. They should be contacted regularly for updates and development of PRSP and to obtain feedback from the public about their reactions.

Briefings of media in large centers should be awareness meetings with opportunity for questions, discussion and debate. The media should be briefed on their role, responsibilities and functions, as well as to increase their awareness of details of PRSP.

Civil society organizations should be included in every aspect of a PRSP and from the beginning of its awareness, throughout all its phases.

Government officials should be thoroughly familiar with the development of the PRSP and involve their own personnel in the different regions to local authority level, if possible, through training. The most effective vehicles to reach/train them are

² See Technical Notes on Stakeholders and How to reach them.

workshops, seminars and distance learning, if technology permits. This should be reinforced by printed materials on an accessible level and in the local language (for local authorities).

NGOs, international and organizations have invaluable networks, both within the communities they serve and within their own structures. If they are informed on a regular basis they can sustain interest in the PRSP

- by using their networks, trainers and education infrastructures
- by distributing information on PRSP through their own channels
- by encouraging the community to be receptive to information on PRSP
- by knowing the best channels to reach the socially excluded
- by encouraging debate in the community

Opinion formers/spokespersons: school teachers, religious figures, professionals, heads of local associations (of women, youth, disabled, the elderly) have the trust of the community and will be able to maintain momentum within the community if they are kept informed and involved. They can

- be invited to a debate at a local radio station
- speak in the town hall
- encourage debate and participation
- explain how the local community can benefit from PRSP

It is important to establish the relationships between different groups and any limitations to their working together. Are they isolated? Conflictual? Mistrustful of each other? Workshops and seminars should include as many different sectors as possible (on the same level of presentation), such as government officials, members of civil society, spokespeople. Their early juxtaposition will encourage dialogue between them and create new information channels to reach other sectors. Such a mixture of different sectors will also make the message more readily acceptable, create an atmosphere of confidence in the project and reach a greater number of people, as well as sending the message, from the beginning, that the PRSP is a participatory program for the entire population.

5. Designing the messages

The next stage in a communication strategy is to develop the appropriate messages to address different groups of audiences. For example: messages for communicating with government stakeholders (such as line ministries) will be different from messages designed for academia, civil society groups, local or international development partners (including bilateral and multilateral agencies) or the general mass audience. Within these stakeholders groups the messages will also be different for different professional groups. Some may be interested in knowing the technical details of the PRSP process. Others will be interested in policy-related issues. The broader public will want to know how the PRSP process can improve their quality of life.

The types of messages, their different target audiences and their channels of dissemination are all interrelated. Some messages, disseminated at the mass level through mass media such as TV, radio, newspapers and magazines, the Internet, etc. can carry basic information on PRSP. The information process will also address different groups of audiences based on their education level, profession, customs and culture and their level of involvement in the poverty reduction strategy. Sharing opinions, ideas and information can be facilitated by means of consultation workshops, seminars, town hall meetings, public debate, etc. At this stage of information dissemination and sharing it is very important to select the communication channels to be used. These channels can be electronic and print media, interpersonal or group interaction, para-social interactions and traditional media channels such as folk songs, street drama, etc.

As outlined below, each target group (government officials, media, civil society) will require a different presentation of the same information. The figures should never vary and the content should be different only in the detail, the visual presentation or the simplification of concepts. As noted above, it is important to ensure that awareness of the PRSP, its principles and phases, as well as expectations for contribution and participation are contained in the first messages to all target audiences. From the initial steps of both the PRSP and the Interim PRSP, documentation should be translated into local languages to be accessible to local authorities, the media and as much of the wider population as possible.

Government officials. It is important to know about the level of understandings of the government staff at various levels involved in the preparation and implementation of the PRSP. There will be several groups in terms of their level of understanding about the PRSP in general and specific technical issues in particular. It may be useful to translate the macro-micro economic and other relevant technical issues for different groups of government staff at local, regional and national levels.

Media. First of all it is essential to understand or analyze the interests and focus of different media organizations in the country. It is essential to understand the audience for a particular newspaper or TV station. Many media organizations will be interested in taking part in the PRSP process once they are portrayed or recognized as responsible institutions for helping the country's progress or development. They should be given the message that it is their responsibility to inform their audiences about the PRSP initiative and to relay the communities' thoughts and opinions back to the broader public. The media should be approached as having an ongoing commitment to reporting about PRSP and integrated into the PRSP process at both government and NGO level. Every country has a different media profile. Some media are divided between government media and other media (as in Ethiopia). Are they in tune with the general population or largely a tool of the government?

The media may require not only briefing, but educating on both economic and development issues. They may not be motivated, either by their readership or by their editors to write about development issues. They are often based in urban areas and not

interested in covering rural issues and in some cases may require payment for writing about specific subjects.

Civil society. Civil society should receive messages that are a combination of what is presented to government employees and what is the brief to the media. Certain segments of civil society (academics, professionals, business leaders) will require much detail. They should expect and be encouraged to engage in dialogue and discussion at every phase of the PRSP. Within each group it is essential to evaluate their main target audiences and to identify the key figures/institutes that should be involved. The continuity of the message is essential to harness their support and involvement.

The informational needs of NGOs and their own networks and audiences should dictate the level, presentation, language, and visual elements of the message. They should receive ongoing information about the program itself throughout the process (press releases, electronic letters, newsletters) to reinforce and supplement the information they receive through the media and other sources.

6. Identifying the networks

Using the existing networks of various stakeholders or creating new networks to achieve the target goals is essential for PRSP communication. The use of networks not only helps disseminate and share information and knowledge, as well as forming public opinion, but also establishes momentum and creates a communication friendly environment.

NGOs, international organizations and aid organizations have both formal and informal networks with each other, may have electronic capabilities and often carry out training, education and out-reach to the socially excluded. They may be the only contact of an isolated village with the rest of the country.

Small organizations with limited funds often have creative ways of reaching their populations through their networks and have a great deal of credibility with their contacts. They often make do with little and are very active.

Media networks

- How are print, broadcast and electronic media organized throughout the country? (national, regional, local; their circulation, languages)
- How much contact do national, regional, local journalists have with each other
- - What is the position of journalists (integrated, marginalized)
- Can they be counted on as allies?
- Can they be reached through an association of journalists?
- What is their relationship with government, NGOs, civil society??

Government networks

- How are the ministries organized?
- Are they centralized or regionalized?
- How strong is their local presence?
- What sectors fall under their responsibility?
- What are the levels of understanding of their personnel (centrally, regionally)?
- How do they communicate with various sectors of society?
- How can information be disseminated to large numbers of civil servants across the country?

NGO networks

How many are there, what is their presence (national, regional, local)?
How do they disseminate information? (print, training, A/V, broadcast)
How important are they in influencing and mobilizing the local communities?

Civil society is more easily reached by the media, is a creator of its own media and can be relied upon for interaction among its members, with government, big business and NGOs. In analyzing civil society, it should be broken down into as many groups/networks as possible: professional groups (doctors, lawyers, accountants, nurses, teachers, others), institutes, research centers and universities/polytechnics), religious groups etc. Each will invariably have a network of members and contacts.

Civil society

Academics: what access do they have to other academics through networks (electronic networks, professional meetings, conferences, student body), to experts, spokespeople? They are often involved in training, communicate nationally and internationally by newsletters, professional journals and electronically.

Professional groups and institutes communicate among themselves and with others by means of professional journals, magazines, meetings and their own spokespersons.

Religious groups have a strong bond with their congregations, are direct links to their affiliated schools and parent networks, often have powerful newsletters, bulletins and journals and can have a strong informal network reaching the socially excluded in their communities.

The socially excluded are the most difficult to reach but have the closest contact with service providers, welfare workers, NGOs and aid organizations, program personnel for specific issues (health education, agricultural sustainability, etc.) and may be reached by the broadcast media, occasional trainers, itinerant medical personnel and a variety of informal oral and visual presentation methods (street theatre, training groups, community spokespersons). It is important to consider whether groups of the socially excluded have spokespersons who should be included in any preliminary and early discussions on PRSP to heighten their awareness and include their voice in the beginning phase of the PRSP? (village elders, tribal leaders, community-minded individuals, midwives)

❖ **How can you ensure that the first audiences that are reached disseminate PRSP information to their networks?**

The general principle is that there should always be an opportunity for dialogue. For example:

- provide question and answer opportunities to provoke discussion in press conferences, seminars and meetings
- build in a phone-in opportunity in radio programs
- invite responses in newspaper articles
- have essay contests in magazines, on the radio
- when distributing print materials, include short questions (what would you like to know more about? Can you comment on this project?)

- always follow audiovisual programs or presentations by discussion

Box 3: Cameroon’s HIV/AIDS education strategy

As a major element of its HIV/AIDS preventive education strategy, the UNESCO Office in Cameroon has created a network of journalists (from Cameroon and Chad) who have been sensitized through a series of workshops and seminars to write more widely, more openly and more humanely about HIV/AIDS, to answer questions from readers, to gain basic knowledge of the medication and therapy available and to dispel its many myths. Within the space of eight months (in 2000), this press network published 210 articles on aspects of HIV/AIDS.

❖ **What new networks can be created?**

Potential networks include radio programs, incorporating messages into the community through meetings, festivals, theatre groups, through spokespeople such as religious and community leaders, midwives, itinerant medical personnel in isolated areas and sectoral networks and organizations (agriculture, health, etc.). New networks can be a combination of government officials, media, civil society, and

the wider public (see Cameroon case example, Box 3). The most effective ones will be those that arise from and involve the socially excluded. The more unorthodox the combination of networks and players may seem, the more creative can be their interaction and ability to communicate.

7. The channels or vehicles

An assessment of existing communication vehicles on a national, regional and local level is essential to ensure that networks are exploited so as to maximize the proportion of the population involved in organized and timely communication.

Radio

- How many radio stations operate?
- Are they publicly owned or private?
- Do they cover all areas? What percentage of the population owns a radio?
- What languages do they broadcast in?
- Do minority language groups have they own program slots?
- Do they have interactive programs?
- What are the most popular programs?
- Do they have well known broadcast personalities?

Consider the entertainment value: a relatively informal, but entertaining, message presented in a radio soap opera may have a greater impact than sending simple visual printed matter to an isolated segment of the community.

Brochures, pamphlets, training materials

If distribution is reliable and has the capability to cover the country, print materials (on a variety of levels of understanding and presentation) should be included as an essential element of any campaign. Used in combination with other media (broadcast,

training, electronic, informal) they will reinforce the message and remain in hand long after the broadcast is finished and the trainer has gone home. However, they do not have the debate potential of radio or the electronic media.

In preparing print materials, it is essential to identify the target audience, their literacy levels, understanding capacity, language. For specific audiences, incorporating visuals such as cartoons and basic simple pictures may be essential for comprehension.

Television
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How many TV stations operate?- Are they public, private or satellite?- What is their coverage?- What percentage of the population owns or has access to a TV?- What languages do they broadcast in?- Do they broadcast programs that would lend themselves to PRSP debate (roundtables, panels, news discussion programs)?- What TV personalities could be approached for PRSP coverage?

Distribution

Appropriate distribution of communication materials is another important area that needs to be considered. For example: How will the print material be distributed? To regional centers? By post? To village town halls for further distribution? If you intend to reach a certain wide band of audience, you must plan how the material is to reach them and not rely on pick-ups from central points. The costs of regular distribution and whether this can be maintained throughout the lifetime of the PRSP should also be considered. The PRSP is an evolving process and if communication is

successful, understanding will develop as well. Any brochures will date quickly. Once the written material is obsolete, they are of little further use.

Understanding and analyzing the channels or vehicles:

Newspapers and magazines

- How many newspapers circulate regularly?
- What is their frequency?
- Are they government owned or private?
- What are the different kinds (financial, political, sport, women's) and their readership?
- What is their potential for inspiring interest and participation of the readership?
- What proportion of the population do they reach?
- What sectors of the population do they not reach?

Spokespersons/opinion formers

- Can they be identified in each community?
- If not, who can identify them – local NGO? Religious center?
- How many are there in each community?
- Can they be counted on to participate in radio discussions?
- Speak publicly to their community?
- Explain print materials distributed to the community?

Journals

- Who publishes them?
- What is their readership? (academic community, professional circles, religious communities, women)
 - What languages do they publish in?
 - What is their frequency?
 - Geographical coverage? Are they national, international, regional.
 - What is their potential for feature articles, interviews, debate, write-ins?
 - Do they have potential for public announcements, advertising, inserts?

ICT/other electronic media

Not all stakeholders will have access to advanced electronic forms of communication (such as Internet, email, electronic mailing lists, on-line interactive tools, distance learning). Those who do can be useful conduits for receiving information to pass on to their own networks. It is useful to identify these users and their involvement in the PRSP process. Their audiences are possibly academic institutions, government departments, main offices of NGOs and aid organizations, industry, research institutes, possibly major schools and local authorities.

8. Feedback

One of the main goals of designing and implementing a PRSP communication strategy is to obtain feedback from stakeholders (including different technical and non-technical audiences, government or non-government, development partners and the wider population). Collecting feedback in a systematic and timely manner helps drive the preparation and implementation of the PRSP (see Niger case example, Box 4). Developing a clear feedback mechanism is essential in both policy formulation and the implementation process. In the preparation stage, the feedback will help establish ownership and partnership in particular, while in the implementation stage it will ensure transparency and accountability.

Box 4: Sharing of information and feedback in Niger

- **How did communication succeed in bringing about effective participation and sharing of knowledge?**

The communication plan underlined two major issues: awareness-raising and the need for real information. It helped in gathering opinions, advice, information, comments and suggestions, proposals and recommendations from all stakeholders through deliberations, people's consultations, surveys, workshops and seminars on poverty. The communication plan also led to the sharing of knowledge through broad dissemination of material on poverty (documentation, maps, video and audiocassettes, television skits, posters, newsletters, leaflets...)

- **How did the communication activities help in obtaining useful feedback from the stakeholders?**

There was greater awareness among journalists about their role in disseminating information which led to massive participation by the media in the process of formulating the PRSP through intensive coverage (radio, press, community and neighborhood radio stations, television, in all national languages).

As part of the feedback, an NGO forum on the Poverty Reduction Strategy was held in Tahoua between 18 and 20 June, 2001. The workshop was organized by the group of affiliated trade unions CDTN (Confédération Démocratique des Travailleurs du Niger) on the PRSP.

The communication provided feedback from the poor sections of society - women, men, young people and vulnerable groups - through public debates organized throughout the country between 4 and 13 August, 2001

The validation workshop provided an opportunity to obtain feedback from the regions and sub-regions through their representatives as regards the consideration given to their concerns in the full PRS document. (see Technical Note 2 on Niger)

9. Costing: the human and financial resources available

The costing of communication activities to support the PRSP, both financial and in terms of human resources, is an essential part of the communication plan and a full budget, over the period of PRSP development, must be developed as part of the communication plan.

Assessing existing communication capabilities within the country is the basis for any further communication activity. They are made up of:

1. the human resources: those who will implement the communication strategy, and
2. the communication infrastructure (the vehicles or channels) within the country.

Human resources:

Are the human resources available within the country?

Do the people have adequate training?

Is the appropriate staff available to coordinate all country communication activities?

If capacity is limited, several options are available:

- The entire communication strategy, or certain elements of it (such as radio advertising or appropriate print materials) can be contracted to an outside company.
- The human resources available can be trained to carry out the communication strategy. This may be time consuming and delay the communication process.
- If a PRSP has recently been initiated (together with appropriate communication) in a neighboring country with similar parameters, it may be possible to borrow the human resources used there for a similar communication activity.
- Judicious use of consultants, who will work together with the in-country staff can be used to move the communication strategy ahead.

In-country vehicles/channels:

How much can be achieved by building on existing networks (using resources in existing radio stations, existing networks of mailing, distributing)?

How much of the population can be covered by these vehicles?

How much of their own material will these resources be able to produce, or will they require translated, adapted texts and messages?

Costs:

The following costs must be assessed:

- Human resources (including coordination of the communication plan), including any training or outside contracting

- Detailed assessment of the channels available (this includes privately owned broadcast media and all networks used by NGOs, aid organizations, etc.)
- Development of specific campaigns and messages (this includes translation and adaptation, events)
- Dissemination of messages and collection of feedback.

As with participation in the PRSP, it is essential to gain the most cooperation from all those who are involved in communication within the country. This will be particularly worthwhile when disseminating messages and obtaining feedback. It will also help keep costs down.

What to consider when preparing costings for a communication plan:

(all figures are very rough estimates which will vary according to the needs and capabilities of the country)

Activity	Carried out by	Costs (USD)	Comments
Assessing existing HR	PRSP team or consultant	10-15,000	
Salary of HR team leader or consultant or company + HR	In-country HR, outside company or consultant(s)	75-100,000 (12-18 months)	This will include preparation of the communication plan and its coordination
Office space, equipment, etc.	Host country	Should be made available	Depending on size of campaign, capabilities, etc. Over the life of the PRSP
Assessing existing communication channels	HR team leader or consultant(s)	10-15,000	Can be carried out at same time as assessment of HR (above)
Training of HR	Outside company or consultant(s)	30-60,000 (range)	More expensive if out-side company
Borrowing HR from neighbors		Depending on agreement	Coordination should be by in-country HR or consultant(s)
Writing, adaptation, translation of messages (depends on number of languages)	In-country HR or contracted out	10-60,000 (range)	Based on 2 print messages + 6 radio messages
Conferences, meetings,	Based on 4/year + 1/month in regions	50-60,000	Based on sponsored facilities
Printing, dissemination costs	Depends on number of languages printed	200,000	Based on 500,000 copies X 2 + postage

To keep costs down:

- a. identify the strengths of the chosen partners, whether members of civil society, spokespersons, media or NGOs and work with those strengths
- b. negotiate so that the partners in communication (whether organizations, community-based media or spokespersons themselves) benefit as well, whether in fulfilling their own needs or obtaining recognition
- c. identify interventions that not only speak to the partners in their language, but also fit into their existing mainstream agendas
- d. choose hooks for issues that will have response among partners and their audiences

Pitfalls to avoid

Communication is, however, difficult, and possible pitfalls in the communication process include:

- **Inappropriate choice of vehicle** that does not reach its target audience because it is inaccessible (such as Internet) or inappropriate (policy papers for a semi-literate farm community)
- **The vehicle may be limited in scope:** media may be urban and uninterested in rural issues or poorly integrated with government and NGOs.
- **The media have not been sufficiently briefed** to understand, appreciate and provoke debate about the PRSP.
- **Inappropriate messages** that are not understandable (language) or cultural insensitive (blatant messages about HIV/AIDS prevention in Moslem communities) damage the credibility of PRSP, will not be understood or acted upon by the target audience, or will simply alienate the potential audience.
- **Poor dissemination.** If the message is not distributed effectively and does not reach its target, it does not really exist (for example, boxes of pamphlets stay in government offices for lack of postage, newspapers do not write about PRSP because journalists are not aware of the program, private radio stations do not include messages because the government is perceived as lacking in credibility and corrupt, rural communities do not hear of the PRSP because there was no coordinator to organize events to inform them).
- **Wrong packaging of the message.** The message will remain static if it is not absorbed or is rejected by its target audiences (for example, the level of the message is too simple for the audience, its language is patronizing or socially offensive, the message is unacceptable to cultural traditions).
- **The message is distorted or disbelieved.** If each level of audience/future communicator is not correctly briefed with the right level of message, it may be distorted and introduce an element of incredulity (for example, stakeholders may have no faith in the ability of the government to help them, NGOs may be skeptical that the PRSP can be effective to produce change), the media may be perceived as being a government mouthpiece)

Conclusion

The communication function lies at the heart of the PRSP principle. Carefully and completely carried out, a strategic communication plan to accompany the PRSP process provides information for all stakeholders, inspires their curiosity to know more and provokes debate. Its most powerful component is its potential to give a voice to the sector of the population at the center of the PRSP - the poor.

Technical Note 1
Stakeholders, advantages and how to reach them

The Stakeholders				Networks
Stakeholders	Who are they?	Advantages	Goals	How to reach them
Government officials, civil servants	Government officials, from sub-ministerial level to regional representatives to local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are closest to the principles of PRSP and the infrastructure of their ministries • Will be most likely to understand broader macro-economic implications of PRSP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To disseminate targeted information to the largest number of civil servants possible, on an ongoing basis, on a level they understand • To ensure that they are aware of principles of PRSP and understand the different phases, importance of communication and participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness workshops • Seminars on principles of journalism • Briefings & debate, encouraging Q&A • Distance learning programs - A/V programs with discussion • Supporting print materials • Encouraging investigating of the PRSP at grassroots level
Media	Print & broadcast journalists from public & private media Independent journalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have traditional media channels • Have attention of the majority of stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that greatest number of journalists are continually briefed on PRSP • To brief journalists on their role and responsibilities within PRSP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • press conferences with discussion • workshops and awareness seminars
Civil society	Academic & research institutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be major transmitters of PRSP information by extensive networks of other academics, researchers • Can contribute significantly to PRSP and so will communicate it further • Have electronic access to colleagues globally - Can be engaged in public debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure their participation at all levels • To use their own networks for dissemination of PRSP information (electronic, journals, student bodies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • press conferences with discussion • workshops and awareness seminars

The Stakeholders				Networks
Stakeholders	Who are they?	Advantages	Goals	How to reach them
Civil Society	Professional groups & institutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be major transmitters of PRSP information Extensive networks through professional associations • Can be engaged in public debate Often have their own dissemination networks (journals, print distribution, radio programs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure their participation at all levels • To use their own networks for dissemination of PRSP information (associations, journals & newsletters) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often have their own dissemination networks (journals, print distribution, mailings, radio programs) • Have their own professional associations
	Religious groups and affiliates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - Have access to large congregations on a regular basis Often have their own dissemination networks (journals, print distribution, radio programs) • Can be engaged in debate • Can mobilize large the population quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure their participation at all levels • To use their own networks for dissemination of PRSP information (congregations, schools) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have powerful spokespersons • have newspapers, bulletins • have regular contact with the congregation • have powerful networks
	Large & small businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have access to large sectors of the population (employees, service users) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure their participation at all levels • To use their own networks for dissemination of PRSP information (employees, unions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often have their own dissemination networks (journals, print distribution, mailings, radio programs)

The Stakeholders				Networks
Stakeholders	Who are they?	Advantages	Goals	How to reach them
Donors, providers of specialized programs	inter-agency organizations, multilateral agencies, with programs in country	Good networks, both within the country and globally in their fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage participation • To use their own networks 	Representative participation in briefings, print information
NGOs, aid organizations	International, national or local NGOs providing services, training, education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are close to the grass roots stakeholders • Can gather groups of grass roots stakeholders for training, service provision • Can encourage the community to be receptive to PRSP • Know the best channels to reach the socially excluded • Can encourage debate in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage their participation, using their specific networks to reach more isolated stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in briefings • dissemination of print information can be used to help simplify information for grassroots audiences • Internet links and e-mailings if possible
Grassroots spokespersons	Opinion formers for any and all groups not mentioned above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can they be engaged in public debate (radio, public meetings, phone-ins) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that representatives of the socially excluded are involved in all aspects of PRSP and informed on an on-going basis 	Opinion formers key figures in public debates ensure they are involved to provoke discussion within community

Technical Note 2

Niger: using strategic communication in PRSP¹

Who was involved in designing the Communication Plan? What were their qualifications and areas of specialization?

The strategic communication plan was designed in stages:

- the initial research was based on very precise objectives
- It responded to the needs of specific audiences
- It aimed at bringing about a change in the behavior of the target groups through appropriate messages, using more effective communication channels.

The process of designing the PRSP communication plan in Niger involved people from different fields in addition to communication professionals. During the message development stage, it was necessary to involve the media and communication professionals and members of civil society. Public debates, field and school visits were arranged in order to obtain the opinions of partners and also the view points of various other people such as traditional chiefs.

Who conducted and organized the communication activities?

It was a collaborative effort. We used the feedback obtained during field visits to come up with ideas; the draft was drawn up by a restricted technical working group, which submitted it to a much larger group in order to flesh it out and make amendments. At the end of this exchange, the communication plan was adopted and implemented for the short-term considering the resources available.

How did the organizers and participants of the PRSP respond to the communication strategy?

- ❖ The organizers were the central, regional, sub-regional and local Administration
- ❖ The participants were civil society (NGOs, development agencies, trade unions, farmers' organizations, women's organizations, youth organizations, religious organizations, traditional bodies and the general public), the University and Parliament. In addition to these groups, there were:
 - ❖ Representatives of the media and communication industry
 - ❖ Political parties
 - ❖ Development partners
 - ❖ The private sector

In the initial phase the idea of strategic communication appeared to be alien to the organizers and participants. However, it gained full acceptance and support as and when it was designed and executed. Politicians made it their key plank, never missing an opportunity to promote it vigorously to the broader public.

How did it succeed in bringing about effective participation and a process of sharing of knowledge?

The communication plan emphasized two major issues: awareness-raising and the need for real information. It helped gather opinions, advice, information, comments and suggestions, proposals and recommendations from all stakeholders through deliberations, people's consultations, surveys, workshops and seminars on poverty.

The communication plan also led to the sharing of knowledge through wide dissemination of material on poverty (documentation, maps, video and audiocassettes, television skits, posters, newsletters, leaflets...)

Did the communication activities help in obtaining useful feedback from the stakeholders and how?

Of course, it did. The following points sum up the feedback:

- ❑ Greater awareness among journalists about their role in disseminating information; which led to
- ❑ massive participation by the media in the process of formulating the PRSP through intensive coverage (radio, press, community and neighborhood radio stations, television, in all national languages).

As part of the feedback, it is also worth mentioning the NGO forum on the poverty reduction strategy that was held in Tahoua between 18 and 20 June 2001 and the workshop organized by the group of affiliated trade unions CDTN (Confédération Démocratique des Travailleurs du Niger) on the PRSP.

The communication plan provided feedback from the poor sections - women, men, young people and vulnerable persons - through public debates organized throughout the country between 4 and 13 August 2001.

The validation workshop provided an opportunity to obtain feedback from the regions and sub-regions through their representatives as regard the consideration given to their concerns in the full PRS document.

What was the budget for the communication program? How much have you projected for the future?

CFAF 50 million for the short-term plan, but initially it was 150 million for the short-term, medium-term and long-term communication plan. CFAF 50 million has been projected in the 2002 budget.

When did the communication campaign begin? Is it still underway?

Yes. The campaign began in April 2001 with respect to the communication plan that was drawn up, but sensitization and launch workshops already provided an opportunity to begin communication on the PRSP with the various stakeholders.

When was the video documentary on PRSP shown in Niger? What were the other audio-visual materials used?

A video documentary (30 minutes long) was shown once on national TV, once on TAL/TV and once on TV Ténéré.

In addition to the documentary, advertising clips and skits were broadcast both by public and private TV channels as well as public, private, community and neighborhood radio stations;

Examples: 120 broadcasts on the Voice of Sahel
 120 broadcasts on the regional services
 20 broadcasts on TV Sahel
 24 broadcasts on TV Ténéré
 30 radio broadcasts on 10 public and private stations = 300 times.

For the skits: 60 broadcasts on Voice of Sahel
 40 on TV Sahel
 24 on TV Ténéré

Niger PRSP: Strategic Communication Matrix

Objective 1: Intensive information to the general public in the implementation process of the PRSP

Activities	Target Groups
Awareness-raising campaign to the government and its members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council of Ministers • Ministries' secretariat general • Central Directors
Awareness-raising and information campaign at Parliament level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National deputies • Administrative department of the Parliament • Parliament's radio diffusion
Design a brochure (8000 copies)	General public (Niamey and its surroundings)
Information and awareness raising of media on the importance of the PRSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public media • Private media • Local radio stations • Community-owned radios
Organize 3 press conferences	Public and private medias at the national, regional, and sub-regional levels

Activities	Target Groups
Put together an information package on the PRSP for the press (2000 packages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and private medias • Community-owned media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a network of journalists specialized in PRSP • Introductory meeting SP/PRSP and the network in the offices of the SP/PRSP • Plan for a ½-day launch/workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and private medias • Local radio stations • Community-owned radios • Members of the network • Members of the network
Organize a working lunch with the press on the PRSP	Public and private media (100 people)
Publication of a bulletin on the PRSP (1500 copies) + routing	Large public
Coordinate with local and community radios on the dissemination of information on the PRSP	Rural and urban population
Negotiate a calendar of services with the private and public media for regional and local dissemination	Public and private media Community-owned media
Gathering images for archives (information bank of photos and films)	All users: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Development partners • Academia • Media
Information and awareness raising meeting of NGOs and national and international associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting of associations and NGOs • Rural platform • NGO network • Gathering of religious groups • Collective health associations

Activities	Target Groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattle-breeders network • NGO and association for women • GAP
Information and awareness raising for youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Youth in school” • “Youth not in school” • Youth clubs • Youth fada • Youth associations
Contests for “youth in school” (illustration of poverty)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University students • Primary and secondary school students • Educated youth
Organize a concert: “Fight against poverty”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public • “Youth in school” • “Youth not in school” • Youth clubs
Creation of “sketches” on radio and TV	General public
Organize sport events for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports associations • Youth
Information and awareness raising for project leaders	Project leaders
Information and awareness campaigns for “village chiefs” and influential members of society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village chiefs • Influential members of society • Spokespersons of village chiefs
Information to development partners on progress of the implementation of the PRSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral and multilateral partners • Representatives of regional and international organizations
General public Consultations	Poor populations: women, men, youth and vulnerable people

Objective 2: Create a website to ensure that a large amount of information on the PRSP is available

Activities	Target Groups
Website creation	Worldwide

Technical Note 3

Vietnam Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy¹ (CPRGS)

Communication

The Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS) was drafted over a one-year period and approved by the Prime Minister of Vietnam in May 2002. This short note describes some of the actions taken over the drafting period to communicate the key messages proposed by the Government to various stakeholders. The focus here is on providing some examples (from many) of the nature of the communication that took place rather than a broader discussion of participatory processes, consultation exercises and their findings. Experience in maximizing participation during the preparation process is written up elsewhere³.

The CPRGS was prepared by a 52-member inter-ministerial drafting committee headed by the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI). The preparation of the CPRGS drew in a whole range of stakeholders and in terms of communication the important challenge was: to ensure (a) that stakeholders were aware of what was being drafted by the drafting team; (b) were in a position to communicate their views on the content of the strategy. This poses a considerable challenge in a country such as Vietnam, with a population of nearly 80 million and a system of government which gives significant decision-making authority to 61 provinces.

The communication tools varied across the audiences and events that the drafting team was trying to reach. In general, communication within the Government system was based around consultation meetings and circulation of drafts with formal requests for comments. Communication between the drafting team and agencies outside government used both established mechanisms for dialogue and collaborative working meetings (such as the Poverty Task Force and the Consultative Group meetings) and special events (such as specially-arranged consultation workshops). Dissemination of information to civil society made use of the NGO resource center and some focal points for networks of local NGOs. The local NGO community is less well-coordinated (partly because their ability to organize themselves in a structured way is circumscribed by the legal framework) and there were almost certainly gaps in the outreach of information to all groups that might have an interest. Communication with the general public relied heavily on the media – national and regional consultation events were televised and there was considerable coverage of the CPRGS in the local press as it was developed. The main stakeholders and channels of communication and dialogue between the drafting team and these stakeholders are summarized in the table below.

³ See Shanks, Edwin and Carrie Turk (2002) *Community Views on the Draft Poverty Reduction Strategy: Findings from Six Sites in Vietnam* World Bank, Hanoi.

I. Stakeholders	II. Communication and dialogue took place through
National government central agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership of drafting committee; • Internal and public meetings; • Analytical work on costing the CPRGS; and, • Circulation and provision of feedback/comments on drafts
Line ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership of drafting committee; • Involvement in analytical background work on localizing MDGs; • Internal communication through sectoral/ministry-level working groups (sometimes donor-supported); • Circulation and provision of feedback/comments on drafts; and • National consultation workshops
Sub-national levels of Government (Provinces, Districts and Communes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation and provision of feedback/comments on drafts; • Regional consultations; and, • Involvement in community consultations
The international community (donors and NGOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative analytical work through mechanism of the Poverty Task Force; • Information-sharing through the Poverty Working Group; • discussions at Consultative Group meetings; • GoVN presentations at the NGO resource center; • participation in regional and national consultations; and, • feedback on drafts (several versions translated into English)
Local civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working directly on the drafts as locally-hired consultants/resource-people; • Information-sharing through membership of Poverty Task Force and Poverty Working Group; • discussions at Consultative Group meetings; • participation in regional and national consultations; • Involvement in community consultations; and, • feedback on drafts
The private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • circulation of draft and feedback coordinated through the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI); • VCCI and trades unions involved in national and regional consultations; and • Micro-entrepreneurs involved in community-level consultations
Politicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft circulated to the Economic and Budget Committee of the National Assembly for feedback; • Female National Assembly members involved through consultation process intended to help mainstream gender issues; and, • Local politicians involved in regional and community consultations
Communities and citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General public receives information through media coverage of national and regional consultations and through discussions of the CPRGS in newspapers; and, • Selected communities provided feedback on the draft strategy through specially-designed consultation process

Technical Note 4 Uganda's First Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)

In 1997 Uganda received temporary debt relief under the HIPC1 on the basis of its PEAP. The Simplified Version of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (October 1999) was created to explain in the simplest terms what the PEAP was about and how it would affect the wider population.



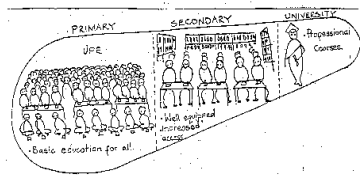
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About 95,000 teachers currently work in primary schools with a pupil/teacher ratio of 110:1 for P1-P3 and 55:1 for P3-P7. However, quality of teaching is substandard, with 30% of teachers untrained and overcrowding in classrooms following introduction of Universal Primary Education.

The education system is faced with the problem of high costs and poor-quality. About 12% of those attending primary are estimated to join secondary education. The children of the rural poor are the majority of those who do not join secondary schools.

About 91% of Ugandans live in rural areas and support themselves through agriculture, yet agriculture is not in primary school syllabus and is optional at secondary school level. Moreover, primary education is not equipping its pupils with practical skills to raise rural incomes and reduce poverty.

5.42 What is the current of Government plan for Education to address poverty?



(i) Primary Education

The overall Government objective is to 'have primary education for all school age children. In January 1997, the Government introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme. Government is assuring four children per family through school by meeting the cost of teachers' salaries, tuition fees, instructional materials (text books, desks etc.) construction of physical facilities, including teachers' houses, and training of teachers, while the parents meet the costs of school uniforms, meals, exercise

Tracking the allocation of funds for greater credibility:


During the allocation of the funds, specific sums had been earmarked for particular expenditures (such as school desks, etc.). Because only a small percentage of the amount was reaching the community, a tracking survey was carried out to establish where the funds went and how they arrived in the community. The full expected amount was posted on the school door. Bottom-up pressure was exerted by the PTA, the school director and up through the chain. The amount subsequently arriving rose dramatically to almost the full original sum.

Explaining to the wider public how funds had been spent:

In 2000 the government revised the PEAP, took stock of achievements and incorporated their consultations with the poor themselves. The resulting communication document, which was disseminated to a large sector of civil society and administrators, showed in concrete terms how families and individuals have benefited from debt relief and specifically how the Poverty Action Fund has provided more services to poor communities. Concrete case studies and examples show how rising figures in school enrolment and improved health care facilities have changed daily life for Ugandans. The brochure answers a series of general questions about the budget and presents in graphic terms where funds are going, what the goals are and how close they are to being achieved.

Fighting Poverty in Uganda

The Poverty Action Fund

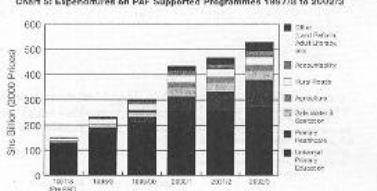


How Debt Relief and Donor Funds have been used to improve the lives of the poor

3. Fighting Poverty: Taking Services to the People

Over the past three years, as more resources have become available there has been a dramatic increase in the services being provided to the people of Uganda. This is probably the most significant increase in Government service delivery in Uganda's history. The following sections demonstrate with direct examples from the five main sectors supported by the PAF, the actual difference these programmes are making to the lives of the poor in Uganda.

Chart 3: Expenditures on PAF Supported Programmes 1997/8 to 2002/3



3.1 Primary Education

Education is a key component of Uganda's PEAP. Education is a means of empowering the poor population, especially girls. Better educated mothers have healthier children, education helps farmers to become more productive, and educational opportunities are in high demand by the people of Uganda.

In 1997 the Uganda Government declared that primary education was to be free for four children per family under its Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy. As a result the numbers of children enrolled in school more than doubled from 2.5 million in 1996 to 5.3 million in 1997. Between 1998 and 2000 the numbers continued to rise to 6.5 million. The policy has been most advantageous to children from poor households who had been previously denied education due to the cost. This particularly applies to girls, who prior to 1997 had been virtually under-represented in schools. By 1999 the gender disparity in education enrolments had almost disappeared.

This sectoral increase in enrolment has placed a very heavy burden upon the system, and the challenge the Government faces is to improve the quality of schooling that children are receiving. In response, the Government is using the additional resources available through the PAF to construct classrooms; recruit teachers, as classes expand in size, and to purchase teaching and learning materials.

By 1999 the gender disparity in education enrolments had almost disappeared.

