



## COMMUNICATION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

According to the World Bank's 2007 Governance and Anticorruption (GAC) Strategy,<sup>1</sup> "a large body of research shows that in the longer term good governance is associated with robust growth, lower income inequality, child mortality, and illiteracy; improved country competitiveness and investment climate; and greater resilience of the financial sector. Research also indicates that aid projects are more likely to succeed in well-governed environments."

Improving governance requires effective and sustainable public sector reform efforts. Empirical evidence suggests that skillful implementation of communication activities can play a critical role in translating reform objectives to actual results on the ground. One of the most frequently cited examples in this regard is the way in which newspaper publication of the education budget in Uganda was associated with a strong and significant reduction of corruption. Capture of non-wage funds decreased from 80% to 20% in a span of five years.<sup>2</sup> Applied research has also found that communication mechanisms can lead to improved governance through citizen engagement initiatives in different types of political systems. As will be illustrated later, not only does informed citizen deliberation on specific policy issues enhance the public-spiritedness of citizens in the developed world, but also in developing countries such as in Benin and China. While proponents of the role of communication in development have repeatedly drawn upon these and similar examples to describe *why communication matters*, not enough has been done in the policy and practice domains to explain *how communication makes a difference*. Returning to the Uganda example above, how is it that newspaper publication of budget data made a difference in the level of corruption? Knowing that teachers and parents gained access to budget information through newspaper publication only tells us that communication had some role in the story. It does not explain how communication mechanisms contributed to reducing corruption. While public access to budget information was a necessary condition, it was obviously not sufficient.

This paper argues that communication's contribution to achieving good governance outcomes lies primarily in the area of influence. Through effective use of communication mechanisms, reformers can influence opinion, attitude, and behavior change among stakeholders toward supporting governance reform objectives. An understanding of communication processes can help reveal the source, message, audience, and contextual factors involved in bringing about positive change. Findings from applied research in political communication provide us with plausible explanations for how communication influence mechanisms contribute to good governance outcomes. The overarching goal of this paper is to identify and elaboration on some of the linkages among the following: reform objectives; communication influence mechanisms; opinion, attitude and behavior change; and good governance outcomes.

1 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. 2007, pp. iii-iv. *Strengthening World Bank group engagement on governance and anti-corruption*.

2 Reinikka, R. & Svensson, J. 2005. "Fighting corruption to improve schooling: Evidence from a newspaper campaign in Uganda." *Journal of the European economic association* 3(2-3):259-67.

## Good Governance

Given the fundamental importance of governance in improving the lives of citizens, it is essential that we develop a clear picture of what we mean by *good governance*. The United Kingdom Department for International Development (DfID)<sup>3</sup> defines good governance as "... not just about government. It is also about political parties, parliament, the judiciary, the media, and civil society. It is about how citizens, leaders and public institutions relate to each other in order to make change happen."

Good governance requires three things:

- *State capability*—the extent to which leaders and government are able to get things done;
- *Responsiveness*—whether public policies and institutions respond to the needs of citizens and uphold their rights;
- *Accountability*—the ability of citizens, civil society and the private sector to scrutinize public institutions and governments and hold them to account. This includes, ultimately, the opportunity to change leaders by democratic means. (p. 20)

DfID's tripartite formula implies that it is the state's mandate to get things done and be responsive to citizens' needs. In development parlance, this is **the supply side of governance**. Accountability, on the other hand, implies the right, but also the obligation on the part of citizens' groups, civil society, and private firms to remain vigilant, engaged, and demand better service provision and delivery from their leaders. This we call **the demand side of governance**.

## Changing Opinions, Attitudes, and Behavior toward Building Political Will, Organizational Will, and Public Will

The World Bank's Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP) has learned from global experience that the success and sustainability of reform, on both the supply and demand sides, often hinges on opinion, attitude, and behavior change among key stakeholders.

Through interviews with reform managers and project leaders in international development, CommGAP found that reform initiatives and accountability relationships are strengthened at three levels:

- **political will** among coalitions of leaders and policymakers (opinion, attitude, and behavior change among elites)

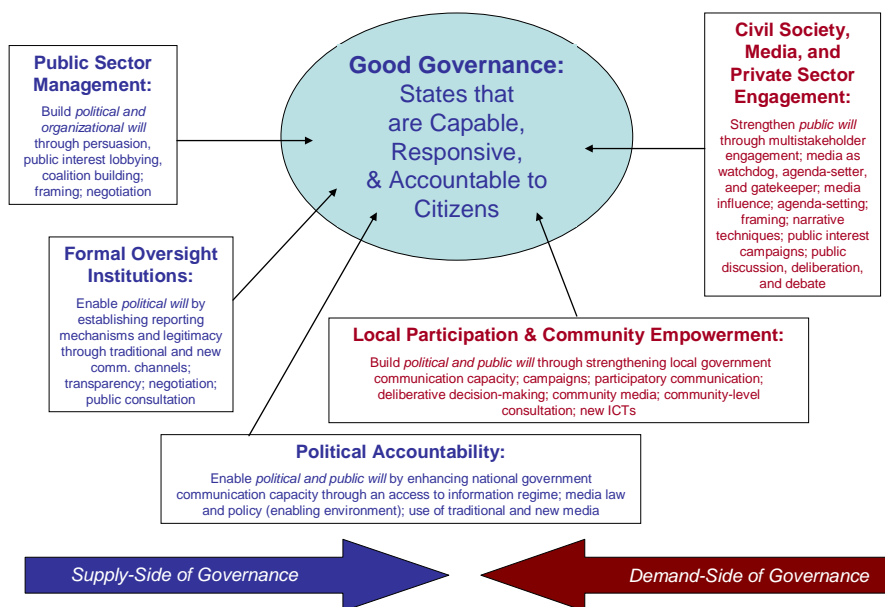
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<sup>3</sup> United Kingdom Department for International Development. 2006. *Eliminating World Poverty: Making Governance Work for the Poor*. Norwich, U.K.: Stationery Office.

- **organizational will** within bureaucracies, especially at middle management level (opinion, attitude, and behavior change among public sector bureaucrats)
- **public will** by mobilizing civil society and encouraging citizen participation (opinion, attitude, and behavior change among members of the public)

The World Bank’s Governance and Anti-Corruption (GAC) Strategy groups societal stakeholders into five categories, or entry points<sup>4</sup>, for governance reform. Strong accountability relationships between and among these entry points are necessary for a governance system to work well. For an illustration of associations among political, organizational, and public will; the supply and demand sides of governance; and the five governance entry points, please see graph below:

*Governance Entry Points and Communication Mechanisms*



<sup>4</sup> (1) Public Sector Management -- the *central government executive*, including cross-cutting control agencies responsible for public finance and human resource management, and front-line regulatory and service provision agencies; (2) Oversight Institutions -- *formal oversight institutions outside the executive*, including the judiciary, parliament and other independent oversight institutions; (3) Political Accountability -- *political actors and institutions* at the apex, setting the broad goals and direction of the system as a whole; (4) Local Participation & Community Empowerment -- *subnational governments and local communities*, with their own service provision responsibilities, and often their own local arrangements for control and accountability; (5) Civil Society & Media/Private Sector Interface -- *civil society and the private sector*, both in their role as watchdogs (including the independent media) and as the recipients of services and regulations, and hence a potential source of pressure for better performance (pp. 39-40).

The GAC strategy's five entry points to governance comprise the stakeholder groups a reformer must influence to build political, organizational, and public will.

Influencing these stakeholders requires skillful application of communication mechanisms that lead to opinion, attitude, and behavior change in support of reform objectives.

The entry points fall under the supply and demand sides of governance, some solidly on either side and others including elements of both. They all have a role to play in achieving good governance outcomes: states that are capable, responsive, and accountable to their citizens (Annex A presents these linkages in tabular form).

### **Communication Influence Mechanisms**

In today's context, elites and ordinary citizens gain access to public information through multiple communication channels -- interpersonal discussion, social networks as well as news and entertainment media -- effective communication makes significant contributions to achieving good governance outcomes. Evidence of the relationship between communication and good governance from applied research is presented below under the following headings: supply side of governance; demand side of governance; and approaches integrating both the demand and supply sides.

#### **Supply Side of Governance: Securing Political Will through Public Interest Lobbying and Persuasion.**

Lobbying is defined as "... the art of educating and persuading your key audiences through direct, one-on-one contact"<sup>5</sup> and is a practical way of building political will among elites. As such, it is an area of practice that draws on techniques of persuasion directly relevant to getting political elites to support reform efforts. Cohen et al. differentiate between *formal* and *informal* lobbying. Examples of the former include meetings in legislators' offices; examples of the latter include engaging policymakers in the *lobbies* of hotels and legislative hallways, networking events, or community meetings. A further distinction should be made between *public interest lobbying*, motivated by a concern for the public good, and *special interest lobbying*, carried out on behalf of particular individuals or interest groups.<sup>6</sup> CommGAP endorses public interest lobbying, both formal and informal, as a means of building political will in support of reform. For examples from development, we can turn to the implementation of the Citizen Report Card (CRC) methodology in various

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<sup>5</sup> David Cohen, Rosa de la Vega, & Gabrielle Watson. 2001, p. 114. *Advocacy for Social Justice: A Global Action and Reflection Guide*. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, Inc.

<sup>6</sup> David Cohen, D. (1999). Being a public interest lobbyist is something to write home about. In B. Smucker [Ed.], *The Nonprofit Lobbying Guide, 2nd Ed.* (pp. 94-103). Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector. Accessed on July 2007 through <http://www.independentsector.org/programs/gr/lobbyguide.html>.

countries, in which citizens are asked to rate public services through a survey questionnaire. One of the most successful CRC experiences was in India, where the effectiveness of the CRC was predicated on the publicly-stated commitment of a high-level government official. The Bangalore-based Public Affairs Center, which developed the CRC, obtained this high-level commitment through public interest lobbying techniques<sup>7</sup>.

**Demand Side of Governance: Building Public Will through Participatory and Deliberative Approaches.**

Democratic engagement, a term used to describe both political and civic participation<sup>8</sup>, is enabled and encouraged by public deliberation. Public participation can take many forms: "one can hold open meetings, do public opinion polls, solicit comments or letters, allow for mobilization in decision-making venues (participatory budgeting), and many other variations...".<sup>9</sup> One particular type of consultative method, Deliberative Polling<sup>®10</sup>, was developed at Stanford University's Center for Deliberative Democracy. A representative sample of citizens from a town, province, or country is recruited and given information on policy options regarding specific issues. These citizens are then asked to deliberate on the pros and cons of these options. Deliberative Polls and similar methods have been deployed in both developed and developing contexts with promising results. For example, in Zeguo Township, Wenling City, China, a Deliberative Poll was conducted for selecting local infrastructure projects. Results from pre- and post-deliberation measurements include the following: participants became more informed about the issues, the increase in information led to opinion change, and participants became more publicly-spirited, ultimately selecting projects that would benefit the larger community as opposed to those that would cater to narrow self-interest. The importance of linking citizen deliberation to political will must be underscored: the results of deliberation in China -- citizen preferences with regard to local infrastructure projects -- were actually implemented by the local executive. In Benin's 2006 presidential election, supposed benefits of citizen deliberation were tested in a field experiment<sup>11</sup>. In the

<sup>7</sup> Gopakumar K. Thampi. 2007. 'From "brakes" to "accelerators": How informed public opinion facilitates behavior change in public officials.' Paper presented at a CommGAP/World Bank workshop entitled *Generating Genuine Demand with Social Accountability Tools*, November 1 - 2, 2007, in Paris, France.

<sup>8</sup> Michael X. Delli Carpini. 2004. Mediating Democratic Engagement: The Impact of Communications on Citizens' Involvement in Political and Civic Life. In L. L. Kaid (Ed.), *Handbook of Political Communication Research* (pp. 395-434). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

<sup>9</sup> James S. Fishkin. 2008. Consulting the Public - Thoughtfully. In S. Odugbemi & T. Jacobson (Eds.), *Governance Reform under Real-World Conditions: Citizens, Stakeholders, and Voice* (pp. 277-286). Washington, D.C.: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Leonard Wantchekon. 2008. Expert Information, Public Deliberation, and Electoral Support for Good Governance: Experimental Evidence from Benin. Paper presented at the 2008 annual conference of the American Political Science Association, among others.

"treatment" condition, political party elites engaged in expert policy dialogues that led to specific policy-driven promises by each party. This was followed by town hall meetings during which citizens deliberated on these promises and were exposed to multiple viewpoints. In the "control" condition, citizens were offered typical "clientelist promises". Candidates made commitments that would appeal to the self-interest of specific groups and their members. The study found that the "treatment" had a positive effect on how much voters knew about the issues and candidates as well as on turnout and voting. Similar to Deliberative Polls, the Benin example shows clear interactions between public will and political will in bringing about good governance outcomes: it took the willingness of citizens to engage and invest time and effort into the political process as well as the willingness of candidates to campaign on empirically-supported issue positions. This multi-dimensional understanding of communication influence that brings together political and public will leads us to consider approaches that more explicitly describe the role of communication and information flows in integrating the demand and supply sides of governance.

**Integrative Approaches: Securing Political Will and Building Public Support through Framing and Agenda Setting.**

Simply put, *framing* is about communicating in a way that leads audiences to see something in a certain light or from a particular perspective. This is usually achieved by tapping into pre-existing beliefs, attitudes, and opinions, and highlighting certain aspects of a phenomenon and deemphasizing others. Political, organizational, and public will can be influenced by framing processes. In the area of climate change, for instance, "*global climate change* is a broader term than *global warming* and brings to mind different aspects of the issue"<sup>12</sup> and these contrasting frames, in turn, call for different solutions. Formally, framing has been defined as "... a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue."<sup>13</sup> Framing occurs "...when, in the course of describing an issue or event, a speaker's emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations causes individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions."<sup>14</sup> A health sector study undertaken in Africa revealed that diseases such as HIV/AIDS were more often framed with

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<sup>12</sup> Lori Ann Post, Charles T. Salmon, & Amber N. W. Raile. 2008. In S. Odugbemi & T. Jacobson (Eds.), *Governance Reform under Real-World Conditions: Citizens, Stakeholders, and Voice* (pp. 113-124). Washington, D.C.: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank.

<sup>13</sup> William A. Gamson & Andre Modigliani. 1989, p. 3. Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95, 1-37.

<sup>14</sup> James N. Druckman. 2001, p. 1042. On limits of framing effects. Who can frame? *Journal of Politics*, 63, 1041-1066.

"negative, derogatory descriptions"<sup>15</sup> in popular media than non-stigmatized diseases such as tuberculosis. An alternative approach is called problem-solution or issue framing<sup>16</sup> where, for example, successful remedies and treatments might be compared with those that are less effective. More generally, the frames through which political elites, bureaucratic middle managers, and members of the citizenry view public issues are capable of driving what these societal actors think about and how they behave as regards these issues. Framing, under certain conditions<sup>17</sup>, has the power to influence opinion, attitude, and behavior change in support of viable solutions to public problems.

*Agenda-setting* has been defined as the ways in which the media agenda, public agenda, and policy agenda affect and influence each other.<sup>18</sup> For example, the public agenda (which implies public will and public opinion) can constrain the policy options of elites, while the media agenda affects what the public considers to be important issues of the day. In fact, a number of studies from around the world have demonstrated that topics and issues that the media present as important (i.e., the order/prominence of news stories) are also those that the public subsequently deems important.<sup>19</sup> Formally, media agenda-setting has been defined as "... some form of positive association between the amount of mass media content devoted to an issue and the development of a place on the public agenda for that issue."<sup>20</sup> A study on media coverage of environmental issues in Ghana<sup>21</sup> found a correlation between the environmental issues that the public considered important (public agenda) and the environmental issues given importance by the media (media agenda). In Uganda, publication of budget information in education helped reduce

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<sup>15</sup> Cornelius Pratt, Louisa Ha & Charlotte Pratt. 2002, p. 899. Setting the Public-Health Agenda on Major Diseases in Sub-Saharan Africa: African Popular Magazines and Medical Journals, 1981-1997. *Journal of Communication*, December, 889-904.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph N. Cappella & Kathleen Hall Jamieson. 1997. *Spiral of Cynicism: The Press and the Public Good*. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>17</sup> For a review of these conditions, see Douglas M. McLeod, Gerald M. Kosicki, & Jack M. McLeod. 2002. Resurveying the Boundaries of Political Communication Effects. In J. Bryant & D. Zillman (Eds.), *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, 215-268.

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.tcw.utwente.nl/theorieenoverzicht/Theory%20clusters/Mass%20Media/Agenda-Setting\\_Theory.doc/](http://www.tcw.utwente.nl/theorieenoverzicht/Theory%20clusters/Mass%20Media/Agenda-Setting_Theory.doc/)

<sup>19</sup> David Weaver, Maxwell McCombs, & Donald L. Shaw. (2004). Agenda Setting Research: Issues, Attributes, and Influences. In L. L. Kaid (Ed.), *Handbook of Political Communication Research* (pp. 257-282). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

<sup>20</sup> Dietram A. Scheufele. 2000, p. 304. Agenda-setting, priming, and framing revisited: Another look at cognitive effects of political communication. *Mass Communication & Society*, 3, 297-316.

<sup>21</sup> K. Kwansah-Aidoo. 2001. The appeal of qualitative methods to traditional agenda-setting research. *Gazette*, 63 (6), 521-537.

corruption from 80% to 20% capture of non-wage funds in a span of five years<sup>22</sup>. A likely explanation is that access to information via newspapers increased parent and teacher vigilance which, in turn, reduced the corrupt behavior of political elites. In the context of natural disasters, the news media's role as agenda-setter is particularly relevant: the world will only learn about disasters that the media choose to report.<sup>23</sup> Policy agenda-setting is the supply side component of agenda-setting theory, where the policy agenda has the capacity to influence both the media agenda and the public agenda. Studies show that communications from policy elites (and perhaps leaks from either disgruntled or ethically-driven bureaucrats) are important drivers of media coverage<sup>24</sup>. Agenda-setting theory makes explicit the interrelationships among the policy, public, and media agendas. The influence these three elements exert on each other is interdependent and reflects the critical linkages between political, organizational, and public will, on one hand, and communication structures and processes, on the other.

### **Communication in the Context of Governance**

At the process level, communication influence mechanisms contribute to improved governance by influencing opinion, attitude, and behavior change of leaders and policymakers (political will), mid-level bureaucrats (organizational will), and citizens (public will) toward supporting governance reform objectives. These pro-reform change processes occur in both the demand and supply sides of governance. At the structural level, communication links citizens, civil society, the media system, and government, forming a framework for national dialogue through which informed public opinion is shaped. Understanding the process and structural aspects of communication is critical to effective governance reform.

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<sup>22</sup> Ritva Reinikka and Jakob Svensson. 2005. 'Fighting corruption to improve schooling: Evidence from a newspaper campaign in Uganda.' *Journal of the European Economic Association* 3(2-3):259-67

<sup>23</sup> Susan D. Moeller. 2008. Considering the Media's Framing and Agenda-Setting Roles in State Responsiveness to Natural Crises and Disasters. Paper presented at World Bank/CommGAP/Harvard Kennedy School workshop on *The Role of the News Media in the Governance Agenda: Watchdog, Agenda-Setter, and Gate-Keeper*. May 29-31, 2008 in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

<sup>24</sup> John W. Kingdon. 1995. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Longman.



Annex A. Entry points to governance reform; key stakeholders; political, organizational, and/or public will; and suggested communication influence mechanisms

<b>Entry Point</b>	<b>Key Stakeholders</b>	<b>Political, Organizational, and/or Public Will</b>	<b>Suggested Communication Influence Mechanisms</b>
Public Sector Management	Central executive (supply side of governance at national level)	Strengthen <i>political will and organizational will</i> through reform coalitions; middle manager buy-in; enhance national government communication capacity	Public interest lobbying; persuasion; policy and media agenda-setting; issue framing
Formal Oversight Institutions	Judiciary; Parliaments (supply side at national level)	Strengthen <i>political will</i> through parliamentary coalitions; enable public reporting mechanisms and enhance institutional legitimacy	Public interest lobbying; persuasion; policy and media agenda-setting; issue framing
Political Accountability	Political party leaders; CSO elites; Captains of industry (supply and demand at national level)	Strengthen <i>political and public will</i> through supporting multi-stakeholder coalitions; facilitating policy dialogue and negotiation; enabling deliberation and debate	Public interest lobbying; persuasion; policy and media agenda-setting; issue framing
Local Participation & Community Empowerment	Local governments & Local Communities (supply and demand at local level)	Strengthen <i>political and public will</i> through coalition-building; increase political efficacy of citizens; grassroots campaigns; enhance local government communication capacity	Participatory and deliberative approaches; public and media agenda-setting, especially through local and community media; issue framing
Civil Society & Media/Private Sector Interface	CSO's; Journalists and editors, Private firms (demand side at national and local levels)	Strengthen <i>public will</i> through engagement and participation of multiple stakeholders	Participatory and deliberative approaches; public and media agenda-setting; issue framing

## CommGAP

The **Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP)**, a global program at the World Bank, seeks to confront the challenges inherent in the political economy of development. By applying innovative communication approaches that improve the quality of the public sphere – by amplifying citizen voice; promoting free, independent, and plural media systems; and helping government institutions communicate better with their citizens – the program aims to demonstrate the power of communication principles, processes and structures in promoting good and accountable governance, and hence better development results.

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