



## Major findings on communications from DAC Peer Reviews in 2008 & 2009

### Keep up the good work - communications is a never ending job

- The political and economic context in which public opinion about aid is formed is not static. Aid ministries and agencies need to be prepared for and try to pre-empt changes in opinion. Therefore, they need to invest continuously in building public support through awareness raising efforts.
- Even when aid is increasing to meet international targets and there has been relatively long-standing, core public support, donors should make efforts to deepen and widen public support to build broader and stronger constituencies.

### Be strategic and targeted

- Comprehensive public awareness raising strategies that coherently set out objectives and targets for public information, public engagement in debates about development and development education are considered good practice.
- Donors need to take a longer-term vision to communications and develop key messages for different target groups on how they are changing how they work.
- Donors find it difficult to balance the need for their impacts to be visible (flag-raising) with their commitment to applying the aid effectiveness principles. This is a major challenge. To these donors the DAC has recommended that they reinforce public and political support for development co-operation by:
  - communicating better the development results of activities;
  - making the public and politicians more aware of the new aid effectiveness approach to delivering aid, the benefits of using different aid modalities and following the aid effectiveness principles;
  - emphasising in communications that development results and impacts are usually achieved most effectively in close partnership with other stakeholders.
- DAC members seem to be more strategic about development education than communications, especially communications about the less visible, and more complex, aspects of development co-operation.
- Well-targeted communication strategies must be informed by market research. Donors use in-depth representative surveys on awareness about development co-operation to different degrees, and sometimes not at all, as a tool to inform communication strategies.
- In the context of reform of a member's aid system, a donor should communicate effectively to internal and external stakeholders on how the system is changing and how this is likely to affect partners. This communication will be crucial to sustain ambitious agendas for change.

### Deliver communications with strategic partners

- When several ministries or agencies deliver ODA in a donor country they should seek synergies in communications about development, to convey consistent and complementary development messages to the public and to maximise resources for communications.
- Continue to involve civil society organisations in public awareness raising - they play a pivotal role in stimulating constructive commentary and public communication. Working more with NGOs to raise public awareness can be beneficial for official aid agencies given the credibility they have with the public.