

# Communication for Positive Change

Empowering voices  
and inspiring global  
development





# WHO WE ARE

CommsConsult believes that communication drives social change. Without it, the best ideas aren't heard and the best research isn't used.

Based in Zimbabwe and the UK, we are a small consultancy of multi-talented communication professionals specialising in the global development sector. We work with institutions, government bodies, think tanks, NGOs, researchers and the media to establish effective communication strategies and to deliver crafted products and services that maximise the impact of their work.

The company is structured around four specialisations: Strategic Communication; Editorial; Training; and Monitoring and Evaluation.

CommsConsult also manages Research to Action, a digital platform which brings together voices and learning on maximising the impact of development research.

An international team of storytellers and communications experts, we have a meticulous eye for detail, a flair for captivating communications and an eagerness to ensure that all our clients experience the best service possible as they interact with us.





# THE DIRECTORS



CommsConsult was set up in Zimbabwe in 1995. Its founding mission statement was 'to communicate clearly in a world full of noise', and it took this message to clients that included the UN, NGOs and community groups.

The organisation wanted to learn how to make communication work for development: not as an 'add-on' to development programmes, but as a fundamental strategic instrument.

**"We empower people at all levels to find their voice, to communicate clearly, to maximise their impact and to evidence their value."**

## FARAI SAMHUNGU

Farai has been at the heart of African development and knowledge dissemination for several years, as the Africa Regional Director of Inter Press Service and a communication and advocacy specialist for international non-governmental organisations and the United Nations.

Farai has trained and mentored journalists, communications staff and researchers to deepen their understanding of the role of communications as well as arming them with tactics to do their work better. She has extensive knowledge of evaluating media and communication programmes as well as developing communication strategies.

Farai has been a juror on a number of media and development awards and was an advisor to the Gender Links' Media and Diversity project and Communications and Partnerships Programme of the Southern Africa Trust. She sat on the IPS international board and Africa boards and was also a member of the ODI Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium Advisory Group. She currently chairs the Board of Trustees for the Research and Advocacy Trust.

## MEGAN LLOYD-LANEY

At different stages of her career, Megan has been a science journalist, a policymaker, an NGO development worker and a trainer.

While working for DFID's Research and Evidence Division, she quality assured the strategic communication and policy influence of up to £30m global public good research. She has helped researchers systematise communication throughout the research cycle to maximise uptake; and has conducted numerous evaluations of the policy uptake and impact of multi-country, multi-partnership, long-term research programmes.

She has led teams that help policymakers, such as the World Bank, to understand and meet demand for information, and to improve knowledge networks. She has also reviewed the effectiveness of many organisations' communications and influencing activities, such as IFPRI, and performed trouble-shooting assignments for both research and development projects such as the DFID-funded AAWAZ Voice and Accountability Programme in Pakistan.

# STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Our strategic communication experts provide the backbone for all of our work. Ensuring that communication practices enhance influence and maximise impact, is critical in our approach to all services.

As well as providing comprehensive strategy building and implementation services, we offer strategic on-hand support in social media, digital platforms, media engagement and search engine optimisation.

"Very detailed analysis and presentation of results. In many ways our expectations have been exceeded. The final report analysed all the key areas of communications and outreach for our team and the recommendations were detailed and practical."

**BORIS DIVJAK, U4**



## SERVICES

### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

CommsConsult has an excellent track record and a wealth of experience in writing comprehensive communications and policy engagement strategies for global organisations.

### POLICY ENGAGEMENT

We can provide ongoing strategic advice and support to optimise Policy Engagement and improve understanding of the political landscape in which policies are made. This support includes:

- Audience mapping to identify key players and critical issues;
- Developing output guidelines- ensuring the right projects are generated for different policy actors to maximise engagement.

### DIGITAL ANALYSIS

To enable intelligent communication practice, CommsConsult can generate bespoke, detailed analytics for online communication activities.

### BRANDING

We can provide support in developing cohesive organisational branding. Working with tone, style and visuals, we can help ensure that branding is used as an effective tool for increasing credibility and awareness.

### NEW MEDIA

We are experts in digital and new media for communication. We can provide ongoing support around corporate communications; social media management services; and capacity building around digital outreach.

### SOCIAL REPORTING

Facilitating dialogue, increasing attendance and ensuring that voices are heard beyond the event itself- our social reporting services enable events to reach out to a wider audience through digital communities; live reportage and multi-media legacy products.



# MONITORING & EVALUATION

We acknowledge the complexity of effectively monitoring and evaluating communication, media, advocacy, policy and evidence uptake. For the last decade of its 20 year history, CommsConsult has built a reputation for working at the nexus of international development evidence and policy, both reviewing the impact of research on policy and practice and strengthening individual and organisational approaches to maximising evidence uptake.

So, whether you want to measure or explain your impact, we'll work closely with you to identify and deliver appropriate approaches, methodologies, tools and outputs to meet your particular M&E objectives.

"When we came to CommsConsult asking for a range of ideas for MEL tools that would help us define and map our impact within an advocacy capacity building project they were able to come back to us with a broad range of options."

**KATE HUGHES, CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL**



## SERVICES

### EVALUATIONS OF INFLUENCE

We will review key evaluation questions concerning the quality, process, reach or impact that your influencing work has had.

### MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING SYSTEM DESIGN

Our practical MEL systems identify and describe indicators and data sources selected, and ensure that different levels of outcomes are tracked.

### TOOL IDENTIFICATION & DEVELOPMENT

Based on an understanding of associated M&E literature, we will tailor and adapt tools to your needs.

### POLICY INFLUENCE PLANS

We'll ensure that activities have a high likelihood of influencing policy; we'll help plan and monitor targeted stakeholder engagement and all related activities to maximise uptake.

### LEARNING & KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

We'll help ensure the best use of learning and new knowledge, designing strategies that effectively capture, develop and share information, leading to improved organisational outcomes.

### THEORY OF CHANGE

We can develop from scratch, review or unpack your Theory of Change, ensuring that links between each phase of the related 'results chain' are strong and that it is operational and measurable.

### IMPACT REVIEWS

We will review and describe different types of potential policy influence.

### BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

We can deploy a suite of traditional bibliometric indicators and alternative altmetric tools to substantiate both the academic and the non-academic reach of publications.

# TRAINING

CommsConsult offers tailor made training to build and strengthen capacity to meet the immediate and long term needs of global development professionals. Using best practice from considerable experience in the field, we offer communication solutions for a variety of strategic and tactical communication challenges.

Whether you are trying to map your audience, improve your social media skills or develop a communication strategy, CommsConsult can find customised solutions to meet your capacity building needs.

"CommsConsult has terrific comms training staff who do not only have excellent content knowledge but also possess awesome learner centred pedagogical skills. They are very professional and above all do their job this with a very human touch!!"

**RONALD MUNATSI, ZEIPNET**



## SERVICES

### BESPOKE TRAINING

Our training modules use participatory learning and peer exchange to ensure participants are able to articulate their needs and that these needs are met.

Modules include but are not limited to:

- Evidence-informed policymaking
- Data visualisation
- Presentation skills
- Policy Briefs
- Engaging with the Media
- Designing a Communications Strategy
- Knowledge Management
- Social Media
- Stakeholder Mapping
- Netmapping
- Strategic planning
- Key messages

### ONLINE LEARNING

We work with global audiences and are specialists in using online tools to deliver training; developing digital communities in order to retain the elements of peer exchange and active engagement which lie at the heart of all of our training practices.

### MENTORING

We are able to provide in-house capacity building services on a one to one basis or targeted around the needs of a specific research or project team. This ongoing support enables the mentee or mentees to receive individual training which is responsive to their needs.

### FACILITATION

CommsConsult are very experienced in coordinating workshops and conference sessions which are engaging for both attendees and presenters. We also offer digital support at all our facilitated events.



# EDITORIAL

CommsConsult provides editorial support, advice and practical services to individuals and organisations to ensure that all publications, digital copy and outreach materials maximise impact and engagement. The team works to strengthen narratives within projects and organisations to produce editorial outputs, which enhance and enable strategic outreach activities.

"From well thought-out plans to real-time delivery and useful retrospective analysis, the team was with us every step of the way. We learned a great deal throughout this project, and these lessons will inform our future programming and serve to enhance our approach to social media and real-time communications."

**SHANNON SUTTON, THINK TANK INITIATIVE**



## SERVICES

### PUBLICATIONS

We can provide guidance and practical support to ensure that all organisational publications support and enhance organisational objectives.

### CONTENT STRATEGIES

CommsConsult are experts in developing and delivering services which enhance the effectiveness and clarity of editorial copy. Whether across a specific campaign or within an organisational website, developing a content plan will maximise impact and engagement.

### DIGITAL OUTREACH

We are able to provide editorial products which complement wider digital engagement strategies, including facilitating digital first publishing, creating striking visual and multimedia materials and generating online newsletters.

### RESEARCH TRANSLATION

We are experts in communicating to a wide range of audiences within the global development sector. We can provide specialist services which repackage and synthesise in-depth research for different users, pulling out key messages and ensuring that it is accessible to target audiences.

### REPORTING SERVICES

Whether it is setting up a research consortium news service or providing live blogging and digital reportage at events, CommsConsult is able to maximise audience engagement and community exchange.

### EDITING & PROOFREADING

We conduct editorial reviews to ensure all products are delivered to an impeccable standard.





# SOCIAL REPORTING

The CommsConsult social reporting package is designed to develop active communities of engagement around your event. Raising the profile of any occasion, our social reporting services enable live peer exchange both during and beyond the event itself, providing remote participants with a means of digital interaction which encourages learning and knowledge exchange.



Experienced in providing an innovative and practical suite of digital services, we tailor each package to the specific event to maximise engagement and enhance its core message.

## Social Media

- Audience Mapping
- Content Strategies
- Bespoke event social media channels (before and during an event)
- Live coverage
- Hashtag feeds

## Editorial

- Press Releases
- Live blogging and features
- Event 'dialogue space'
- Digital newsletters
- Research translation
- (Post) Event magazine



## Video

- Event trailers
- 'Talking Heads' interviews
- Retrospective event film

## Photography

- High quality image capture
- Digital curation



# WEB CONTENT

The website is the digital face of any organisation with potential to reach a wider and more global audience than any other form of media. We believe content must speak clearly and powerfully, to be understood, to engage and to inspire action.

Through strategic analysis, advice and real-time support and delivery CommsConsult can ensure that the digital presence of your organisation enhances reputation and optimises audience interaction.

## Website Strategy Development

- Capacity assessments
- Media mapping
- Content scheduling
- Website healthchecks

## Engagement

- Stakeholder mapping
- User experience reviews
- Social media integration

## Quality Assurance

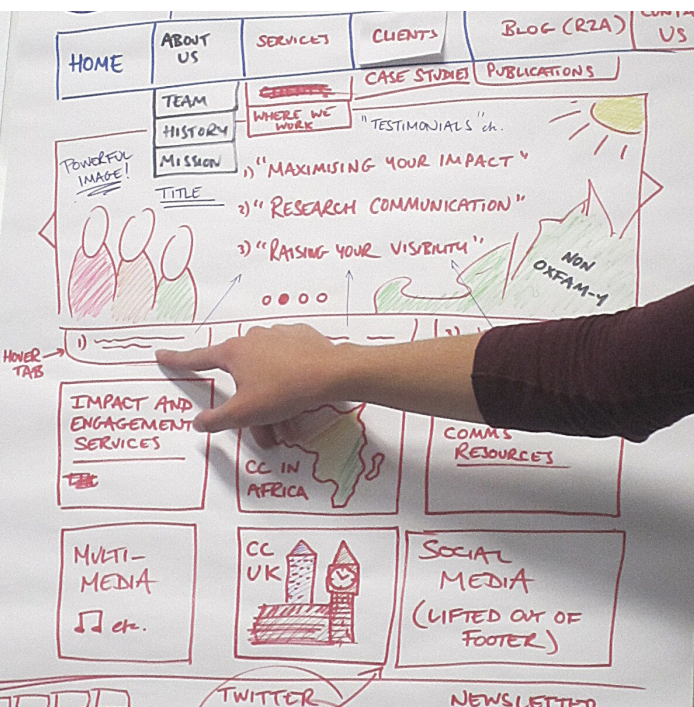
- Editorial code
- Copy Editing
- Proofreading

## Content Generation

- Narrative development
- Theme identification
- Blogging
- Rewriting

## Design & Redesign

- Branding review
- Brief development
- Project management







# MENTORING

We know that communication activities are not always prioritised. CommsConsult offer mentorship services that work within teams and across consortia to strengthen existing capacity and to ensure that principles of strategic engagement and tactical communication are embedded into long term working practices.

Combining institutional support with group and individual learning sessions, we use our in-house and extensive network of expert mentors to maximise organisational reputation and impact, as well as providing invaluable professional development for mentees.



## A tailored approach

We conduct extensive diagnostics around organisational objectives and current capacity to establish the best approach for each client.

## Individual Learning

We provide training and support which explicitly speak to the needs of each mentee, both remotely and face to face.

## Peer Exchange

We organise, facilitate and deliver workshops which enable knowledge exchange between team members and institutions.

## Digital Communities

To ensure ongoing development we set up and monitor online forums where mentees can interact and share learning.

## Sustainable Outcomes

Our mentors work with individuals and institutions to enable them to implement learning in the workplace- providing advice and critique on specific outputs. We provide lasting advice and build the confidence of individuals and institutions to work on their own in future.



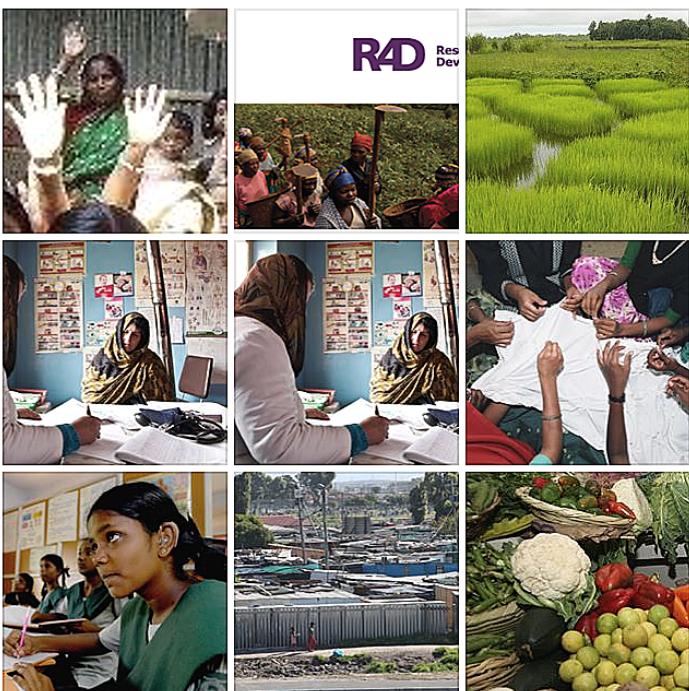




# NEWS WIRES AND OUTREACH

Every project and every organisation has a story to tell. Taking the time to find those stories and to share them in a compelling way can sometimes be difficult.

Our team can bring your stories to life; we can build communities who want to listen and develop narratives which illustrate the impact of your work and give a human voice to your research.



## Stories of Change

- Source, research and craft individual features
- Develop ongoing series which profile successes
- Conduct key 'on the ground' interviews to capture real impact

## News Portals

News wires, which are associated with an organisation but which provide considered and wide ranging news and information around specific topics, can prove an invaluable means of building reputation and in reaching new untapped audiences.

We can:

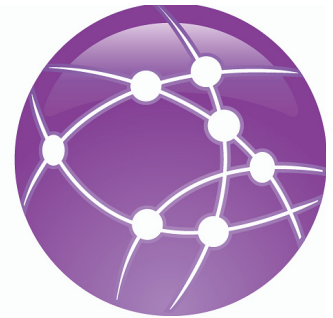
- Set up, populate and manage a digital news portal around relevant themes
- Write regular news articles featuring the work of your project/organisation
- Source and write news from external sources to broaden audience and consolidate organisation reputation and credibility

## Digital Newsletters

- Design bespoke digital and interactive newsletters
- Manage online subscription and distribution
- Monitor engagement and reach



# Research to Action



## THE GLOBAL GUIDE TO RESEARCH IMPACT

[www.researchtoaction.org](http://www.researchtoaction.org)

@research2action

Research to Action is an online platform that brings together the best resources on how to get impact from development research. A community of leading practitioners create and curate content that is immediately relevant to individual researchers and to research managers and networks looking to get their work noticed by influencers and decision-makers.

Research to Action offers a suite of information resources and capacity-building tools including How To Guides, Reading Lists and Webinars on topics like Knowing Your Audience, Writing Policy Briefs and Using Digital Tools. A vibrant and vocal digital community interacts through blogs, comments, polls

and social media discussions around research uptake and successful, replicable communication practices.

With an ever-increasing emphasis within the global development sector on impact and evidence, Research to Action offers an invaluable knowledge and learning hub for those who need to make their research travel, and to document the journey.

In addition to serving the broad research uptake community, the platform provides customised spaces and services to meet the needs of specific research events, programmes and teams



# R2A SERVICES

## ➔ Dialogue Spaces

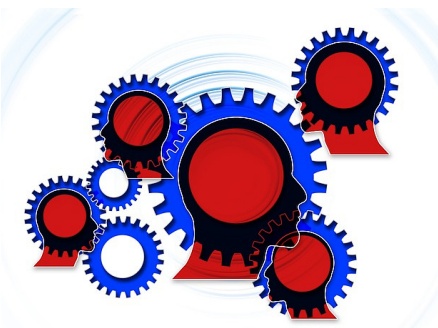


Research to Action provides an online home for capturing the knowledge and interaction at events (or other initiatives) focused on research uptake.

Using a suite of multi-media formats, a Dialogue Space deepens and widens the engagement and reach of your event, and preserves a dynamic record of the learning.

Our team will work with yours to produce a news flow of articles, blogs, videos, briefings and social media content, which is anchored on your Dialogue Space on our platform. We can help you to re-package the material for your own website and audiences, and we will share agreed content with our community.

## ➔ Online learning



Research to Action can provide a customised on-line learning platform for your team, through all the stages of the research cycle.

In addition to guiding you through our publicly available tools, our team of experts will design and deliver customised learning materials and webinars for your team.

The platform has functionality as an on-line classroom and as a help desk, so training programmes can be enhanced by individualised follow-up and mentoring from our team.

## ➔ Highlighted Content



Research to Action partners with intermediaries in the research impact sector, like global and regional networks and peer-reviewed journals, who want to highlight their work and tell their stories.

A partnership arrangement guarantees space and prominence for this content on the platform, and through our social media streams.

In keeping with the independent and open-source spirit of Research to Action, all partners and their content will be quality-assured and transparency about highlighted content ensured.

# CLIENTS



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