

# AudienceScapes

## Africa Policy Research Series: Ghana

Communicating with Policymakers About Development Issues



A Guide for the International Development Community

By Hannah Bowen

Based on in-depth interviews with senior Ghanaian officials as part of the AudienceScapes research project

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## About InterMedia

InterMedia ([www.intermedia.org](http://www.intermedia.org)) is a nonprofit research, evaluation and consulting company with expertise in media, communications and development. We equip clients to understand audiences, design projects, target communications and gauge project impact in developing and transitional societies worldwide. Based in Washington, D.C. and London, U.K., with experience in more than 80 countries, InterMedia's key strengths are its people—area experts skilled in scientifically-based research and focused on client solutions—and its extensive network of local research partners and contacts.

The AudienceScapes project, launched in April 2009 with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, applies InterMedia's core competencies to the needs of development practitioners worldwide. This AudienceScapes report is part of a multifaceted program to inform development practitioners about ways to improve communication and media efforts aimed at the grassroots as well as at the policy level. The findings and conclusions of this report are those of InterMedia and do not necessarily reflect the positions or priorities of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.



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## Introduction: The AudienceScapes Project



- **How can targeted research help members of the development community hone their communication efforts at the policy level and at the grassroots level?**
- **What can members of the development community do to help improve the policy information flow in Africa, with a view toward supporting effective development?**

These questions are being addressed in the multiyear AudienceScapes project, launched in April 2009 by InterMedia with initial support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The research component of the project focuses on Africa and comprises two parts: **quantitative analysis** looking at the general population's access to and use of media, access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), and personal communication habits; and **qualitative analysis** of how development policymakers and influencers (*referred to collectively in this report as "policy actors"*) gather, assess, share and disseminate critical policy information.

**AudienceScapes' broad aim:** to provide baseline research, analysis and recommendations to help guide the media and communications efforts of development organizations, thereby supporting better development outcomes.

This report on Ghana draws lessons from the experiences of policy actors to determine how information on key development issues is flowing to those who need it, and to suggest ways to improve this flow, with a particular focus on how international development organizations can help.

Similar policy analyses will be available for Kenya and Zambia, as well as separate quantitative reports for each country analyzing national use of media and information and communication technologies (ICTs). All of the reports, as well as the complete datasets collected in the quantitative research, will be available on the AudienceScapes website scheduled for launch in early 2010.

Armed with this material, development professionals and their local partners will be able to design better-targeted development communication initiatives, improving the return on investments in them.

### *Policy and Information in Ghana – Qualitative Methodology*

This research involved in-depth interviews with 15 senior members of the Ghanaian policy community, including representatives from parliament, government ministries, presidential offices, business associations and multilateral donor institutions (*See Appendix B for more details*). The group included two important categories of policy actors: those with direct policy-making authority and those who influence the policy process. This design

allowed researchers to compare such actors' information-gathering and information-sharing habits, and also to describe policy information flows from both perspectives. The interview subjects were guaranteed anonymity to encourage forthright and informative answers to the interview questions.

The interviews, conducted in July-September 2009, lasted roughly one hour each and focused on three broad themes:

- **Most important and influential information sources** - where policy actors typically go for news and information about key development issues; in what forms they prefer to get information; and how they see news/information-gathering habits fitting into the policy cycle.
- **Personal assessment of policy-relevant information sources** - their level of satisfaction with the availability and quality of information; recommendations for improvements; assessment of media coverage of key issues; and assessment of information exchanges with development stakeholders (local NGOs, business groups, foreign groups, etc.)
- **News and information sharing** - how and why the policy actors share information with various parties, particularly the general public; assessment of the public's capacity to dialogue on key issues; assessment of the impact of new technologies on information sharing; and feedback loops with the public.

The interview transcripts were coded manually and analyzed in a “key subjects” matrix to identify common threads in the use, assessment, sharing and dissemination of policy information. The AudienceScapes analysis team then highlighted themes that would be of particular interest to the development community. (The “Note on Research Methods and Next Steps” at the end of this report looks at the effectiveness of this methodology.)

### *Structure of This Report*

- The Report Summary is a quick overview of the main points; Chapter 1 provides context with a brief description of Ghana’s prevailing environments in politics, development policy, media and ICTs.
- Chapter 2 is a detailed analysis of the interviews, divided into four parts: media sources; institutional and personal sources; dissemination and feedback; and structural challenges.
- Chapter 3 distills this analysis into a list of **key recommendations for the international**

**development community** on: A. how to contribute more effectively to the Ghanaian policy debate; and B: how to improve the policy making environment by providing Ghana’s policymakers with technical and related assistance.

- The final section offers a few recommended next steps for the project: how the current research methodology might be enhanced and expanded in the future, based on lessons learned so far. The appendixes provide further details on research methods, InterMedia and the AudienceScapes team.

We hope you find this report useful, and we welcome your feedback.



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## Report Summary



InterMedia conducted in-depth interviews with 15 senior Ghanaian policy actors, comprising mostly senior politicians and bureaucrats, as well as a few influential figures outside government. The interviews focused on how the policy actors gather, assess, share and disseminate information critical to development policy work. The aim was to understand how external stakeholders, particularly members of the

international development community, can most effectively engage and assist these policymakers.

The policy actors showed substantial overlap in information source preferences and media use habits, as well as in the ways they share information with fellow policy actors. They highlighted several actions that development organizations could take to improve the policy information environment. They also described many challenges in communicating with the public about development issues, as well as offering some creative solutions.

### ***Habits of Gathering Information***

The policy actors rely heavily on Ghanaian radio “news headline” programs, newspapers and radio call-in shows to inform policy priorities and set agendas, even though they are frustrated with a perceived lack of accuracy and objectivity of local media. All policy actors said they compare multiple news sources to balance political biases of various outlets and to confirm the accuracy of reports. For coverage of world news, policy actors tend to favor a few prominent global channels such as CNN and BBC, and to a lesser extent Al Jazeera.

*Policy makers have, on the whole, adopted new technologies to meet specific information needs.*

**Policy actors have, on the whole, adopted new technologies to meet specific information needs.** For example, they tend to use the internet as a one-stop source for current news (GhanaWeb, and to a lesser extent

MyJoyOnline, were cited as favored destinations) and as a resource for answering specific questions. They use email and mobile phones to communicate more rapidly with colleagues and stakeholders. However, **respondents reported scant use of news and information services delivered by third**

**parties via email or SMS.**

Policy actors monitor public opinion in their constituencies through frequent mobile phone calls from and to constituents, periodic visits to the constituency, and reports about the “word on the street” from informal contact networks.

High value is placed on examples or case studies based on the experiences of other governments and international development organizations to inform the Ghanaian policy design and implementation process. Such examples typically are found via the internet or through workshops and briefings with global partners.

Formal institutional channels for gathering policy information are generally considered slow, prompting many policymakers to rely mostly on informal networks to access policy-relevant statistics, publications and other official input.

Although policy actors see strong informational value in the many policy-oriented gatherings they must attend (e.g., workshops, seminars and stakeholder consultations), they complained that these formats are costly—both in time and money—and suggested that ICT solutions might allow them to get similar information at lower cost.

### ***The Role of Global Development Partners***

Perceptions of the role of international development organizations in the domestic policy process vary widely, from primarily

technical resources, to advocacy roles, to policy implementers, to simply sources of requests for country information. Similarly, descriptions of information sharing with such organizations ranged from regular formal consultations to sporadic ad hoc discussions.

Some policy actors expressed frustration that development organizations tend to devote more time to identifying problems or policy shortcomings than going to the next step and offering a menu of constructive solutions.

*The interviews yielded a number of observations about how global development organizations can improve their outreach efforts.*

### ***Recommendations to Development Partners for Reaching Out to Policymakers***

The interviews yielded a number of observations about how global development organizations can improve their outreach efforts. Most important was to understand the political culture, notably the important role of personal contacts as opposed to formal networks, and the oft-expressed need to cross-check and verify information.

- Ally with respected local groups who can both support and corroborate arguments and information presented to

policymakers. In particular, Ghanaian policy actors say they tend to pay more attention to a certain view if it has the backing of well-represented national organizations (of citizens, businesses, local citizens, etc).

- As mentioned above, Ghanaian policymakers are hungry for instructive examples of policy experiences from other countries and settings. Development groups should make such information readily available, and make sure this information relates to local circumstances.
- Recognize the importance of, and try to work with or through, media conduits of policy information that tend to catch policy actors' attention. Notably, policy actors stressed that Ghanaian radio stations and newspapers play a major role in setting the agenda and are thus a central part of the domestic political debate.
- Use formats for presenting information that policy actors tend to prefer—especially concise, written (or text) briefs that summarize key points, supplemented by regular face-to-face meetings. Lengthy workshops or conferences were viewed as less efficient modes of information exchange.
- Contribute information at the right time, particularly at the earliest possible time—policymakers say that the earlier input is received, the more it influences policy. It is therefore incumbent upon development organizations and other interested parties (such as research institutions) to stay abreast of the Ghanaian political calendar as well as the course of events with respect to particular regulations, legislation or public initiatives.
- Help connect on-the-ground implementers and high-level policymakers wherever possible, to improve the flow of evidence-based development information upward from the grassroots and enhance the “street credibility” of proposed policies. This will also help to allay policy actors' concerns that less-represented groups will be left out of the policy process. *One suggestion for doing so: sponsor local focus groups on particular policy issues or initiatives and make the results available to policy actors.*

### ***Recommendations for Helping Policymakers Get the Information They Need***

Many of the policymakers and influencers noted that improving the flow of policy information is worth only as much as the quality of the information made available. Interviewees also described an information paradox: although they would like more of certain types of information (including more hard data about the country and its inhabitants, more timely reports of activities, broader input from stakeholders), they also feel overwhelmed by the volume of information coming in and their limited capacity to sort through it to find the most relevant and important elements. They urged development organizations to help in the following ways:

- Bridge the development data gap to facilitate more informed decisions.

- Improve information management systems and organizational capacity, and invest in supporting infrastructure.
- Devise methods to help government officials retain institutional knowledge, especially during periods of political transition when the policy baton is often dropped.
- Support the training of skilled, impartial journalists who are capable of both judging the importance of various development issues and turning stories about these issues into compelling content for general readerships.
- They consider it neither particularly efficient nor effective at this stage to use newer ICTs (email, cell phones, SMS) to disseminate information to the public and many other domestic stakeholders.
- Creative strategies for reaching illiterate and/or disinterested members of the public—such as using local dialects when delivering messages, holding large public events, and creating awareness of development issues through drama or music—were encouraged by several interviewees. Policy actors said traditional authorities, such as chiefs or queen mothers, are important for reaching out to the public on certain family- or property-focused issues.

### ***Information Exchanges with the Public and Other Stakeholders***

- The main challenges cited by policy actors in disseminating policy information to the public were illiteracy, multilingualism, lack of interest in development policy issues and the limited capacity or willingness of local media to accurately disseminate such information.
- Rather than try to spread policy information through the media, some policy actors suggested direct methods work better. These include buying radio airtime for direct access to the audience and arranging policymakers' appearances on radio call-in shows.
- Although policy actors rely on organized interest groups for policy input, some also voiced doubt about the utility of widely used stakeholder consultations that feature such groups. They feared that relatively unorganized but nevertheless important stakeholders (such as youth or those with HIV/AIDS) would typically be left out.
- Feedback from the public and other domestic stakeholders on implemented policies was described as more forthcoming than input into policy design; alongside organized forums, individuals said they use a number of informal channels to make their concerns heard.

## Chapter 1. The Ghanaian Context for Policy Information



### *Politics*

Ghana's political system caught the global spotlight last year when President Barack Obama chose the country for his first visit to Sub-Saharan Africa after taking office, a trip aimed at "highlighting the critical role that sound governance and civil society play in promoting lasting development."<sup>1</sup> Indeed,

Ghana has enjoyed political stability for nearly two decades, including two peaceful transitions of power in the course of the last five multiparty elections.

Ghana's current constitution, ratified in 1992, established a strong executive branch headed by a president, a vice president, and a council of ministers appointed by the president and approved by parliament. The legislative branch consists of a single house of parliament, divided into various committees for the drafting and revision of bills. A supreme court oversees the judicial system.<sup>2</sup> Both executive and legislative positions carry four year terms, though presidential candidates are able to serve a maximum of two terms in office. Presidential candidates must receive at least 50 percent of the popular vote, a condition which triggered a runoff election between the top two vote-getters in the first round of the 2008 elections.

Ghana is divided into 10 administrative regions which are further subdivided into districts. At the local level, Regional Coordinating Councils and District Assemblies administer decentralized programs under guidance from the national government. Alongside these political and administrative areas, there are also geographically distinct traditional authorities (consisting of Chiefs, Queen Mothers and other traditional leaders) who retain certain types of power (for example, land ownership and dispute resolution).

Ghana's political history has created the context for the current development policy environment; the evolution of multiparty democracy, with intense competition between political parties, has led to a political culture embracing free debate but often focusing on the divisions between parties. Under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana became the first Sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from colonial administration in 1957. Political parties formed rapidly and competed vigorously, but electoral competition was not fully consolidated until 1992. In the intervening decades, three military regimes interrupted civilian democratic rule. The last was led by Jerry Rawlings, who first seized power briefly in 1979, and then ruled as a military leader from 1982-1992.<sup>3</sup> In 1992 and 1996, under a new democratic constitution, he was elected to two terms as president in

*Ghana's political history provides important context for the current development policy environment.*

increasingly actively contested elections. Barred from running in 2000 by constitutional term limits, he stepped aside and watched as his party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), lost the presidency to the New Patriotic Party (NPP)'s John Kufuor. Kufuor was reelected in a close election in 2004, but a second peaceful transition of power, back to the NDC, took place in 2008. The current leader, President John Atta Mills, began his administration in January 2009. Political competition is dominated by these two main

parties, but numerous smaller parties actively compete. Politics is still a male-dominated arena, with only 11 percent of seats in parliament held by women, according to World Bank figures.<sup>4</sup>

### **Development**

Economic progress has not been as impressive as Ghana's political progress, but it nonetheless outpaces much of Sub-Saharan Africa. With a gross national income (GNI) per capita of \$1,430 in 2008, Ghana is still far from overcoming the challenges of poverty and remains well below the global average GNI per capita of \$10,090.<sup>5</sup> Although the country is expected to meet the first Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015, much work remains to be done to meet the other goals, particularly in health and gender equality.<sup>6</sup> In the last years for which data is available (2005-2007), the World Bank estimates that:<sup>7</sup>

- Fifty-four percent of the population lives below the \$2 a day poverty line.
- Life expectancy is 60 years, compared to a world average of 69 and a high-income country average of 79.
- Twenty percent of Ghanaians do not have access to improved water sources, and sanitation is even less developed—for example, only 15 percent of the urban population has access to improved sanitation facilities.
- Fewer than half of all roads are paved.
- Only 65 percent of adults (over 15) are literate.

There is intense competition for scarce development resources. With so many issues to address, Ghana’s poverty reduction strategy is primarily focused on achieving middle-income status through growth-driven approaches to human resource development, increasing the competitiveness of the private sector, especially through the modernization of agriculture and infrastructure, and promoting good governance.<sup>8</sup> The new NDC administration’s 2008 campaign platform contained three key pillars:

**Economy**—increasing public savings, improving the efficiency of public service delivery, accelerating “public investments in energy, transport infrastructure, telecommunications, and water resources,” modernizing agriculture, and improving the investment climate.

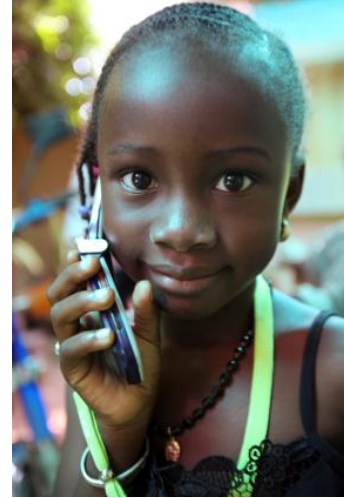
**Education**—improving the quality of education through teacher training and distance learning, and encouraging participation by the private sector in education.

**Health**—focusing on preventive care against targeted diseases, and improving “curative” medical care to international standards.<sup>9</sup>

Ghana receives more than \$1 billion in official development assistance each year; in 2007 (the last year for which data is available), aid constituted more than a quarter of government expenditures.<sup>10</sup> The key donors, according to reports by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, are: the African Development Bank; Canada; Denmark; the European Commission; France; Germany; The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria; the International Fund for Agricultural Development; Japan; The Netherlands; Spain; Switzerland; the United Kingdom; the United Nations; the United States and the World Bank.<sup>11</sup>

### **Media**

In 2008, Ghana was one of only seven African countries with media environments rated as “free” by the Freedom House Freedom of the Press Index.<sup>12</sup> Other observers concur. According to the BBC’s country profiles, “Ghana enjoys a high degree of media freedom and the private press and broadcasters operate without significant restrictions. The Commonwealth Press Union has described Ghana’s media as ‘one of the most unfettered’ on the continent.



The private press is lively, and often carries criticism of government policy. Lively phone-in programs are staple fare on many radio stations.”<sup>13</sup>

This freedom has fostered robust competition among private media outlets, in addition to two state-owned newspapers and the state-run Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)’s radio and television stations. More than 130 newspapers and more than 100 radio stations inform Ghanaians about current events; households with televisions can generally access the three main local stations (GTV, TV3 and Metro TV) and sometimes more than 20 additional stations.<sup>14</sup>

This partly reflects the diversity of Ghana’s population: there are more than 70 spoken languages in addition to English.<sup>15</sup> The most widely understood are the Akan languages (also known as Twi, and encompassing Ashanti, Fante, Akuapem, Akyem, Kwahu and others), Dagaare, Dangbe, Dagbane, Ewe, Ga, Gonja, Kasem and Nzema.<sup>16</sup> Local radio stations regularly provide programming in languages other than English, and even national TV news broadcasts include some local language segments.

One important factor in the free and competitive media sector is the permissive regulatory environment and government respect for the independence of media outlets. The National Media Commission is tasked by

the Ghanaian Constitution to safeguard media freedom and create national media policies, and a host of professional associations and civil society organizations also guard against government intervention.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Information and Communication Technology***

Access to increasingly sophisticated ICTs appears to be growing rapidly in Ghana, albeit from a low base. Like much of Sub-Saharan Africa, mobile phone ownership is exploding and leapfrogging the rate of access to land lines. Although the number of fixed telephone lines

has remained relatively stable at two per 100 people, mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 people shot up from two to 32 in the five-year period from 2002-2007.<sup>18</sup> Access to the internet has grown, but still only 7 percent of the population said they use the internet on a weekly basis; only 4 percent said they had access to the web at home.<sup>19</sup>

These levels of access, along with measures of ICT skills and price, placed Ghana ninth of 35 African countries on the International Telecommunications Union’s 2007 ICT Development Index.<sup>20</sup>

*One important factor in the free and competitive media sector is the permissive regulatory environment and government respect for the independence of media outlets.*

Interestingly, the price measure used to calculate the ICT Development Index (a price basket of fixed-line telephone, mobile telephone, and broadband internet service costs as a share of monthly GNI per capita) indicates that Ghana's ICT services are more expensive than 124 of the 150 countries measured.<sup>21</sup>

Ghana's regulatory agency, the National Communications Authority, is responsible for ensuring healthy competition in the telecommunications industry. In 2008, a separate Information Technology Agency was created to manage the growing IT sector. In July of that year, the government of Ghana sold a 70 percent stake in the formerly wholly state-owned Ghana Telecom telecommunications operator to Vodafone for \$900 million.<sup>22</sup> In the mobile arena, the new Vodafone Ghana competes with five other operators: Globacom, MTN, Tigo, Kasapa and Zain. Intense

competition between service providers encourages the expansion of both infrastructure and applications, such as Globacom's investment in fiber-optic cables to offer broadband internet service, or MTN's recent introduction of "Mobile Money" cash transfers.<sup>23</sup>

Although the ICT environment is rapidly changing, there is still a long way to go before Ghana fully capitalizes on the opportunities that advancing technology presents. The World Bank's Knowledge Economy Index, which measures countries' capacities to harness knowledge for economic development based on "four pillars related to the knowledge economy—economic incentive and institutional regime, education and human resources, the innovation system, and ICT," places Ghana 115<sup>th</sup> out of 145 ranked countries.

## Chapter 2. Analysis of the In-Depth Interviews



*Drawing from recordings and transcripts of the 15 interviews, this chapter identifies trends and observations about the availability and quality of information on development issues for policy actors, as well as the means by which they share or communicate such information with various stakeholders.*

*Section 2.1 describes the role of media sources (radio, television, internet and print) as well as information services delivered via email and cell phones. Section 2.2 discusses institutional and personal information sources. Section 2.3 discusses the dynamics of public dissemination of and feedback on policy information. Finally, Section 2.4 focuses on structural challenges to gathering the right policy information.*

## In-Depth: Information-Gathering Habits

Interviewees were asked to describe the ways they access information throughout a typical work day. Although specific habits varied, overall trends were remarkably similar. This composite profile highlights the most common daily routines.

### A Typical Policy Maker's Information Diary

Tuesday, September 15	<b>AM</b>	
	5:30	Wake up and begin organizing the day's agenda.
	6:00	Glance at CNN (or BBC) morning news during breakfast.
	6:30-8:30	Leave house and commute to work: listen to the newspaper headlines on Joy, Radio Gold, and Peace FM. Buy the <i>Daily Graphic</i> and <i>Ghanaian Times</i> .
	9:00-12:00	Check email (if office internet is available and working today). Two meetings with colleagues. Skim <i>Graphic</i> , <i>Times</i> , and any other newspapers left in the office while waiting for colleagues. Write a letter requesting latest report on district-level activities.
	<b>PM</b>	
	12:30	Attend lunch workshop announcing new program.
	2:00	Formal briefing by UN staff on status of international guidelines.
	3:00	Review reports, newsletter, and today's internal memos. Call friend at Ghana Statistical Service to ask him to bring a copy of the last census report to dinner.
	4:30	Review proposed tax legislation (call colleague for explanation of its finer points). Do a web search for examples of tax laws from other West African countries (at internet café if necessary). Draft initial comments to submit.
	5:30	Call colleagues to confirm tomorrow's meetings. Respond to World Bank request to reschedule briefing to the Country Director.
	6:30	Meet former schoolmates for dinner and discussions.
	8:00	Return home. Go online to read email and browse Ghanaweb. Leave GTV on in the background.

## 2.1. The Role of Media-Driven News and Information Sources

### ***How and where do policy actors get information?***

Information-gathering habits among the 15 policy actors interviewed were fairly similar despite different policy interests, occupations and personal preferences. In general:

- Traditional media and the internet are

widely used to gather policy-related information

- News and information services delivered by email or SMS are only sporadically used.

**I. Traditional Media** Policy actors look to a combination of several major radio stations and newspapers to keep up with current events and public opinion.

### **In-Depth: Cross-Checking**

To verify the accuracy of local media stories, Ghanaian policy actors said they habitually flip back and forth between different stations to get each outlet's view of the headlines. Although the stories are usually the same, the perspectives and interpretations can be very different. Similarly, interviewees reported reading at least two local newspapers regularly; one ministry official said he reads as many as eight newspapers on a given day. On television, the three main stations provide another opportunity to compare multiple views on the same story.

A member of the parliament described this cross-checking as a policy actor's responsibility. He said that decision makers must "go to the source" and decide for themselves the truth of the matter:

*For instance... if one radio station is [giving a report], I will change to another station. If it's really a hot issue, other stations would be discussing it, you [can] pick from all these and then you can form your own idea.*

In addition to comparing multiple media outlets, policy actors routinely verify the reports they receive from colleagues, constituents and other policy influencers. Another parliamentarian described why he must "cross-check to make sure [the information is] authentic. The fact that you come and tell me this doesn't mean that I should take it hook, line and sinker. I also have to... make sure what you've told me is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." Many of the policymakers described calling friends or colleagues to confirm the accuracy of information received from other sources.

At times, however, the best a policymaker can do is to trust his or her own intuition:

*[Sometimes] we don't have ... time or the means to do background checks on some of the information we get... So you are either inclined to agree with the source of the information or disagree, without any evidence to back it one way or the other. You just...more or less use your intuition most of the time, and then your long stay as a civil servant ... guides you in a certain direction.... (administration official)*

Indeed, these two media are closely linked, as **the main Ghanaian radio stations broadcast morning programs in which presenters read and comment on the day's newspaper headlines. Interviewees tend to listen to one or more of these programs daily, and subsequently read articles of interest in the newspapers themselves.** Although they are busy, policy actors said they find time to monitor local news by listening to the radio while getting ready early in the morning or in their cars, and by reading newspaper stories during spare moments throughout the day.

[Joy FM](#) appeared to be the most popular radio station among the interviewees, but they also habitually compare the coverage of multiple stations, including [Radio Gold](#), [Peace FM](#), [Unique](#) (the state-owned station), [Citi FM](#), and others. They also reported skimming multiple newspapers; most commonly cited were the state-owned papers ([Daily Graphic](#) and [Ghanaian Times](#)) and the private [Chronicle](#), [Business & Financial Times](#) and [Daily Guide](#).

**Only a few interviewees mentioned reading international publications as a regular source of news**, but those who did said they focus almost exclusively on news magazines such as *The Economist*.

In addition to news headline programs, **radio call-in shows were often mentioned as an important tool for gathering information on public opinion.** Both national and local stations host shows in the public call-in format. Interviewees did not cite international radio broadcasts as a primary source of development

policy information, despite their relatively large audiences nationwide.

Television was seen as a less important source of local news and information than radio and print media, perhaps because TV does not fit as well into the busy schedules of policy actors. Interviewees reported sometimes watching three local stations—GTV, TV3 and Metro TV—but never as their primary news source. However, international news stations, such as CNN, BBC, and to a lesser extent Al Jazeera, are very popular for world news. Several interviewees commented that they pay extra for DSTV (a satellite provider run by the South African company Multichoice) or other services to access international programming at home. Although a few interviewees have televisions in their offices (if they have offices), none use television regularly as a source of information on the job.

## ***II. Traditional Media's Quality and Value***

**Policymakers and influencers all expressed deep frustration with traditional media.** They widely view newspaper coverage in particular as overly politicized and sensational, with the leader of a business association even commenting of one paper that, “they may be telling a few lies but that is common of all newspapers.”

Both accuracy and choice of material were criticized by interviewees who blamed the low quality of journalism on lack of training or experience, or on weak demand for higher-quality news.

They generally perceive radio broadcasts as politically slanted, but at least transparently so. They view television as the least biased, but as suffering from the same limited depth.

One ministry official said he believes the Ghanaian media provide more information than do local media in many other developing countries. He shared common sentiments about their weaknesses, however, saying that the media's primary focus on making money leads them to add sensational stories to capture public interest. Despite this, he suggested policymakers "can sieve through that [sensationalism], and get what we require."

**Parsing information and comparing different sources to triangulate degrees of accuracy are common practice for all of the interviewees.** All expressed, in one form or another, the need to cross-check information, compare multiple presentations of the same story, and judge for themselves the merits of any piece of information, reflecting a healthy skepticism about any single source's ability to be consistently accurate.

**International media coverage is also viewed with some caution.** As a member of parliament observed, "I wouldn't say [international media] are balanced but I'd say they are credible," meaning that reports are accurate but that the choice of stories and their treatment are colored by the outlet's perspective. One official said that, when he watches news about the Middle East, he counts on CNN and BBC to mention all

the facts, while Al Jazeera might not provide a different perspective on the news.

Global outlets were harshly criticized for their treatment of Ghanaian and African news—policy actors believe international media tend to either ignore African news entirely, or focus solely on negative stories. A representative of a multilateral agency said, "That [negative] bias is there, there's never been something nice. It's

always been the diseases and the wars, but we have other things to showcase." A presidential advisor went further, saying, "[the] international media is horrendously misinformed about Ghana." Because Ghana, and the rest of Africa, are not strategically important for those media's home markets, he suggested, there is little incentive to cover African news in great depth.

### **III. The Internet**

Unlike the vast majority of Ghanaians, the interviewees all said they have internet access at home, in their workplace or both.<sup>24</sup> They complain that household subscriptions are expensive, but they believe the professional and personal value is well worth the investment.<sup>25</sup>

All interviewees save one said they have embraced the internet as an efficient means of tracking down specific information and cross-checking sources, mainly through Google or Yahoo!.

**Policy actors overwhelmingly visit GhanaWeb, a private website developed by an expatriate Ghanaian as a central portal for information**

*"[The] international media is horrendously misinformed about Ghana."*

about Ghana.<sup>26</sup> Many also check MyJoyOnline, a news site run by the popular radio station Joy FM. Both sources provide a summary of current events and opinion pieces in a single place.

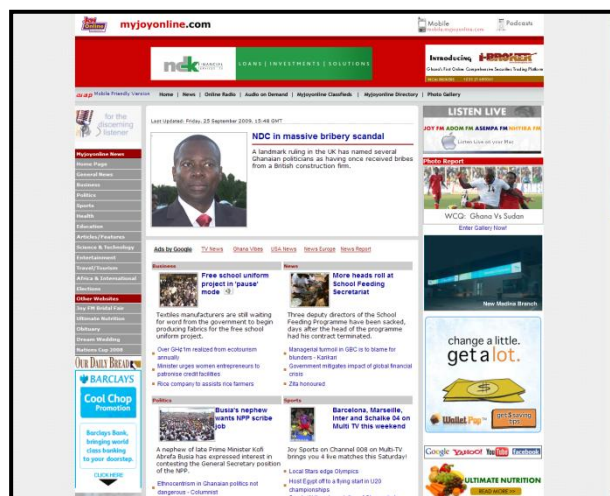
Searching for specific work-related topics through Google or Yahoo! is commonplace. Notably, policy actors search for examples of policies and best practices from other governments as well as for resources on the websites of major international organizations, such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the World Health Organization.

For example, a member of parliament mentioned searching online for details on the ways legislators in India, the UK and Burkina Faso have handled particular policy issues, such as instituting a tourism tax. One nongovernmental official said he has used the web to get ideas from the International Chamber of Commerce and other countries, particularly in West Africa. He compared, for example, the tax treatment of business losses in Ghana to their treatment in The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Liberia.

Several policy actors mentioned the dangers of internet fraud as an impediment to using online resources more extensively at their workplaces, as agencies fear that they may be

targeted or infiltrated by internet criminals. A business association representative believes “state institutions are not using the internet that much... [because] we have cyber crime all over the place.... [If] you have most of your letters

and information online..., somebody will just pick it and be using the letter head [fraudulently].” Interviewees also maintain the same wariness about web-based news and information sources as they expressed about traditional media sources, though the convenience of the web largely trumps misgivings about reliability.



#### IV. News and Information Services via Email or Mobile SMS

These are not predominant sources of policy-related material for the interviewees, though some mentioned using email information services from a few helpful sources, including relevant international organizations such as the World Bank. **None of the respondents said they pay particular attention to, or subscribe to, SMS news and information services to contribute to policy information. Six of the 15 interviewees reported having internet-capable phones, but none claimed to use the mobile web regularly or for much more than quickly scanning email messages.**

## 2.2. Institutional and Personal Sources

- Informal professional and social networks are critical to accessing policy information in a timely fashion, though formal channels remain important.
- Global development partners were described as valuable resources, but policy actors had both positive and negative opinions about these partners' approaches to communication.
- Email, SMS and mobile voice calls have made two-way policy communication more efficient, particularly compared to costly and time-consuming meetings and workshops.

### ***I. The Importance of New Communication Technologies***

Email, SMS and mobile voice calls are revolutionizing institutional and personal information flows for Ghanaian policy players, adding more speed, flexibility and efficiency to the frequent professional exchanges with both individuals and institutions. **Email and SMS are also highly valued for their virtual paper trails** that provide users with records of exchanges for future reference and verification that voice exchanges typically do not.

All of the policy actors interviewed said work-related communication by mobile voice and SMS is now routine; most mentioned calling colleagues, constituents or friends to ask for information, check facts or to set up meetings. As one ministry official observed:

*Email and SMS are also highly valued for their virtual paper trails...*

*Because of the mobile phone, anytime you can get anybody, anywhere to talk to, and get information.... I think the mobile phone is a very useful... tool for... things like [the] management of education.*

**That said, interviewees are mindful of the expenses they incur for mobile communications; some policy actors prefer SMS over voice calling because of the former's**

**lower cost.**<sup>27</sup> And although email is trumping letter writing in many contexts, it is not yet the exclusive method of transmitting information. Official work in Ghana remains far from paperless, and voice-based exchanges are just as important as they were before the email age, given that many people outside the educated professional elite still do not have reliable or continuous access to email.

**The efficiencies of new communication technologies for sharing information also appear to be heightening policy actors' frustrations with the relative inefficiency of the many meetings, workshops, seminars and lectures they must attend.** Indeed, the policy actors all mentioned that the costs of such events, both in time and money, are very high given limited institutional resources.

Policy actors are satisfied with the quality of information they receive in such gatherings, but they complained that the time needed for planning and holding meetings is often excessive.

For example, some noted that bringing decision makers and policy influencers together for a seminar typically requires hiring a room, paying for participants' transportation expenses, providing refreshments, and preparing copies of relevant materials for distribution. Inviting individuals from many regions of the country can be particularly challenging to schedule, coordinate and fund.

## **II. Formal versus Informal Information Networks**

The efficiency issue comes into play from another angle as well: the use of formal versus informal information sources. Decision makers and influencers seeking critical information from individuals and institutions still navigate a variety of formal channels, both within their own organizations and with external actors via letters, established reporting mechanisms,



*...it is often nearly impossible to get relevant information in a timely fashion through formal requests.*

formal meetings and such. **Although formal communication is more likely to provide records of interactions and a credible format for discussion, policy actors said it is often nearly impossible to get relevant information in a timely fashion through formal requests.** As one parliamentarian described the situation:

*And it will even amaze you at times [that] we even write to state institutions [to request copies of their records] and it draws, what we call in our own parlance, blanks.*

A business association representative blamed the slow pace of formal channels on “institutional inertia,” but others suggested that the problem is a combination of poor information management systems, reluctance to share information, and suspicion across political parties (*more on these issues in Section 2.4*).

**Rather than battle through slow formal procedures, nearly all interviewees agreed that personal connections allow for more timely access to information. Said one politician:**

*I may not... really want to go through that bureaucracy of writing officially, through the processes and that kind of thing because ... it takes time.... [But] once the person on the other side knows who you are and the purpose for which you would like the information, he will be prepared to give it to you.*

As one parliamentarian described his personal informants, even though much of their

information may turn out to be incorrect, it is important to take everything in and not criticize the source directly so that the line of communication remains open. For him, fostering relationships with many sources is critical to informing his policy decisions.

### **III. Information Sharing with Global Development Partners**

Relationships between policy actors and global development partners don't fit set patterns. Interviewees expressed a range of views on the flow of information with partners from foreign organizations (including governmental, nongovernmental and multinational bodies).<sup>28</sup> Some said they have regular formal contacts; others said they interact on a very ad hoc basis. Some described open, two-way information-sharing relationships; others said only one side

calls upon the other for information or provides information unilaterally. Policy actors also expressed a broad range of perceptions of the roles international organizations play in the policy process: from primarily technical resources for development, to implementing agencies, to simply sources of requests for country information.

**Some of the most successful communication styles cited by the policy actors include regular meetings (which seemed to foster closer working relationships) and development institutions making themselves available to provide targeted information resources when called upon for assistance.**

However, among the various policy areas discussed, policymakers' specific needs led to

#### **In-Depth: The importance of social networks**

One of the interesting complexities of Ghana's policy environment is the extent to which decision makers and influentials mix professional and social roles. Many spoke of the need to draw on social connections to get information on policy topics. For example:

*I have a number of groups...I mean people that I've ... grown up with, most of whom are in decision-making positions all over the country, so we meet often. [Their perspective] is what they bring, and I [tell them] what government thinks. (Member of parliament involved in education issues)*

*[With] your friends, you can meet over a bottle of Coke or whisky or whatever and talk over it. But if they are not your friends, it can be difficult. You can't just walk into somebody's office, say a lawyer or something, and tell him, 'This is a law I don't understand, can you take me through it?' It becomes difficult, unless you have a friend, and when you meet, you deliberately will raise the topic and then discuss it here and there. (Member of parliament involved in communication issues)*

**It is especially important for interested parties to recognize these social groups as an important source of information. A policy actor's trusted friends are an integral part of the policy process, regardless of whether they hold a formal advisory post.**

different levels of interaction with development partners.

Information flows between policymakers and development partners through various channels. Although much of the information exchange occurs in meetings, when pressed, **interviewees tended to say they prefer receiving written documents (split between preferences for hardcopy and digital formats) so they have a record of the exchange.**

As previously mentioned, **many policymakers report that the written documents they currently receive tend to be unwieldy, and they prefer shorter summaries or distilled analyses.** As an official active in agricultural issues noted, he also prefers to get information that has already been churned over somewhat by someone else.

*So some level of analysis has gone in... so when you pick it up you can quickly finalize your analysis and make your decision or make your position on it...*

When receiving input from development partners about policy design, policy actors on the whole said that **the earlier information reaches them, the more likely they are able or willing to incorporate it into their analysis.**

**Opinions of development organizations' contributions to policy efforts ranged from very positive to fairly critical.** On the positive side, an official involved in development planning praised the wealth of experience from other developing countries that Ghanaian policymakers can draw on:

*[The staff of development organizations] is useful to us because they have experiences we can share and we... [invite] them to share their experiences with us, but they don't make the ultimate decision. The ultimate decision is taken by Ghanaians. But we [see development partners] as people with experience that we can tap.*

Just as policy actors use the internet to find examples of other countries' policy experiences, they also look to international development experts for such insights.

**Unfortunately, some policy actors felt that development organizations do not always fulfill this potential as resources.** For example, a member parliament complained that the research and discussion he sees coming from international organizations is mostly just talk, with no concrete solutions proposed or action to solve problems once they are identified. His metaphor for this failure:

*It's like going to a hospital and diagnosing your disease and they don't give you medicine. So you hardly will go there.*

**Some policy actors also complained that donor agencies should spend more time seeing what their money is used for on the ground,** rather than relying primarily on reports from the recipient, to better understand the challenges faced and successes achieved by local implementers.

Some also suggested that training and informational workshops typically held by development groups would be most effective if the workshop materials were regularly made

available to participants ahead of the gatherings, to allow time for preparation and better formulation of questions.

Most did not elaborate on their individual relationships with international NGOs, but some frustrations were expressed.<sup>29</sup> **One senior member of the executive branch griped that when global NGOs fund a project, they seem to prefer using international staff rather than using qualified local staff.** This advisor also criticized the decision-making processes of international NGOs for not sufficiently empowering local NGOs, given that most or all strategic decisions are usually taken by the global partner while the local partner merely implements the project and perhaps monitors progress.

That said, the issue of empowering local NGOs is a complex one; although the policy actors generally described these organizations as important players in the development process, local NGOs also raised some suspicions.

For example, three policy actors each indicated



separately that it is worthwhile to confirm the reputability of local organizations because individuals have been tempted in the past to

form NGOs solely to get access to development funding without delivering significant services.

Some interviewees also noted that it is difficult at times to sustain cooperation with local NGOs through longer projects because they can be lacking in organization or funding. There was, however, an acknowledgement of local NGO's critical role as the last mile in the development infrastructure, the organizations that really work with the poorest Ghanaians.

### 2.3. Policy Information and the Public: Dissemination and Feedback

- Citizens can play an active role in the Ghanaian policy environment through both formal channels such as public forums and by informally contacting policymakers.
- Policy information targeted at the public is often channeled through the media (viewed as an often challenging endeavor) or through non-media conduits such as local branch offices and traditional authorities.
- Creative outreach strategies such as public events and the use of local languages have been successful in reaching target populations.
- Formal stakeholder consultations are common but seen as imperfect tools for gathering input.
- Public feedback about the success of policy implementation was described as far more prevalent than public input into policy design.

## ***I. The Role of Citizens in Development Policy***

Ghana's democratic political system leaves plenty of room for public debate, and the government officials interviewed in this study affirmed that citizens have ample opportunity to weigh in on policy issues. Common formal venues for such exchanges include election-year candidate forums and regular "meet your MP" meetings held during legislative recesses. Politicians said constituents also regularly contact representatives or their assistants by phone (see box) and also make frequent visits in person.

**Politicians stress that, more often than not, constituents come to them with requests for assistance in personal matters (for example, financial help to pay school fees) rather than policy concerns. Politicians say they are expected to handle such requests as part of**

*There is a clear trend toward using new communication technologies to bolster accountability.*

**their public role, cutting into time available for policy work.**

Many politicians seek out policy-relevant public input by touching base frequently with contacts (often party-affiliated young people or personal acquaintances) in their constituencies, who give regular updates about the "word on the street." One senior administration official mentioned his local barber shop as a source of information on public opinion, or anywhere he can "go incognito, and sit somewhere and engage people in conversation."

These face-to-face and phone contacts remain dominant in Ghana, where the reach of electronic communication is still limited. **Policy actors indicated that communication with the general public via email is not commonplace.**

**They did not mention any use of online social networking tools that have become politically important in many middle- and high-income**

### **In-Depth: Flashing**

One parliamentarian described his rural constituents' practice of "flashing" when they want to reach him. Mobile voice services in Ghana operate on a prepaid system in which airtime use is charged only to the caller, rather than to the recipient. People frequently try to avoid charges by making themselves the recipient of a call.

A caller will dial the number of the person they wish to reach but hang up before the call is answered. The missed call, or "flash," then signals the recipient that he or she should call back and incur the charges for the call. A parliamentarian indicated that constituents with information or opinions to share would typically "flash," expecting him to pay for calls on his personal mobile phone to hear their information.

countries.

That said, **there is a clear trend toward using new communication technologies to foster accountability** among policymakers. As one ministry official observed:

*I think that, because of the way information is [becoming] so easily available [through new technology], it's not easy for you to tell a lie.... Something happens in Accra here and somebody in Wa [the capital of the Upper West Region, very far from Accra] will get to hear of it even before parts of Accra get to hear of it, just because it's so easy to transmit information. [With so many sources of information], you can't deceive anyone.*

Traditional Ghanaian media, especially radio, provide an obvious and important link in the chain of communication about policy issues from decision makers to the general public, though this side of the policy actor-media relationship is delicate. Although some interviewees claimed to have positive links with local media in terms of sharing information, most said they worry about the quality or objectivity of reports that are ultimately published or broadcast. A representative of a prominent interest group said:

*Sometimes [the information] may not go out in the format in which you want, and that's normal with the media. They have their own gate keeping ... [which] is determined by the policy of the media house.*

Some interview subjects gave sobering views about what could be required to get reporters

interested in a policy-relevant story. As one nongovernmental official put it, reporters will often request interviews on topics they have chosen to pursue, but “when you have something that you want to [highlight in the media], then you need to negotiate” with the journalists to get them to pay attention to it. A few interviewees indicated that a well-catered luncheon or other enticements are sometimes the only way to promote coverage of a development-focused story.

Another media dissemination strategy cited was to offer journalists complementary training programs covering a particular subject or skill set related to the area in which media coverage is sought. For example, the Ministries of Agriculture and Health have sponsored education for journalists to improve the quality of coverage in their sectors. However, they described mixed results in terms of stimulating higher-quality content on related topics.

Large public events such as speeches, durbars [traditional community celebrations akin to political rallies that typically have a development theme], and workshops were cited as one of the most successful ways to generate local media coverage and thereby reach the people. Still, **one senior politician suggested it is often easier to go straight to the public with important information rather than through the media:**

*Instead of the many press briefings where breakfast and lunch would be served just to address the press, who may or may not carry the message across...this money [for breakfast and lunch] can be put together to pay for airtime on the radio [instead].<sup>30</sup>*

**Apart from paid programming or advertisements, another direct method of appealing to citizens is for policymakers to participate as guests on radio call-in shows.**

Parliamentarians in particular mentioned using local radio stations to reach a large number of constituents during their visits back to their constituencies.

One Member of Parliament mentioned using local call-in radio to answer constituents' questions about issues such as a proposed tax hike on gasoline. This can be especially effective in areas where English is less widely spoken, since many local stations broadcast in local languages such as Twi.

Otherwise, government ministries also tend to rely on district-level partners (either government agencies or NGOs) to gather input on policy issues, implement programs and create awareness about particular topics. **The local branch offices of the Ghana Education Service, Ghana Health Service, and Ministry of Trade and Industry were cited as critical links to Ghana's 10 regions.** When parliamentarians are confined to Accra during the legislative sessions, they rely on local political party apparatuses to disseminate

*Beyond the need to make information available to hard-to-reach populations, there is the question of how to ensure that the information actually is seen or heard, and is in fact understood by the targeted recipients.*

information and gather feedback about decisions that have been made.



**Traditional authorities such as local chiefs are another route to tapping into public interest in Ghana,** as these authorities retain a great deal of power in such matters as land use and community organizing. One ministry official mentioned working with Queen Mothers to communicate information on gender equality programs, while a representative of a donor agency agreed that traditional leaders provided an excellent means of mobilizing communities and disseminating information:

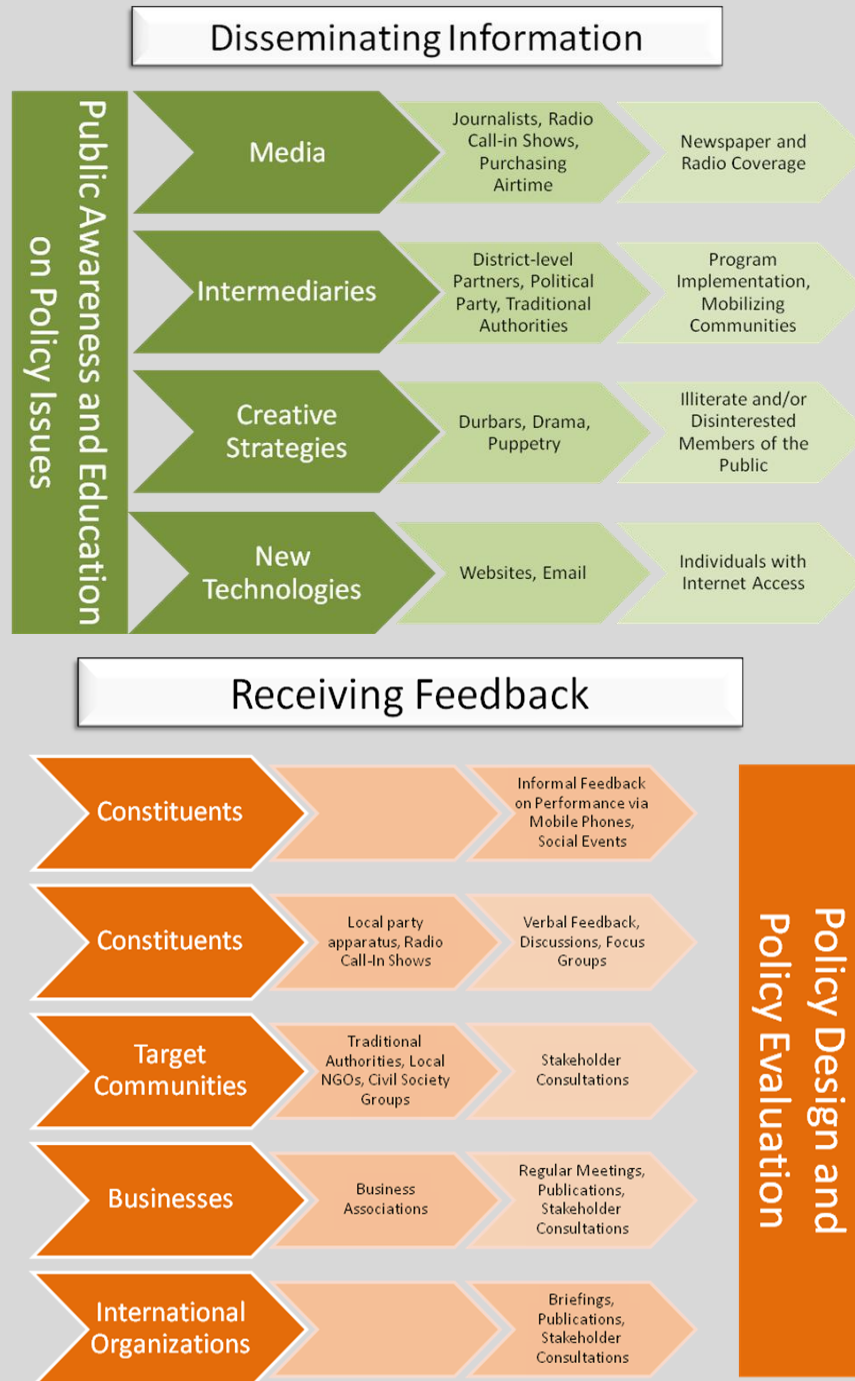
*Traditional leaders, they are very [helpful]... like [for work on] HIV, in Krobo, they [district health workers] are using Queen Mothers to do some sensitization and to support care and support groups. So we use them a lot. They are [typically] the opinion leaders [in their communities].*

**Beyond the need to make information available to hard-to-reach populations, there is the question of how to ensure that the information actually is seen or heard, and is in fact understood by the targeted recipients.**

Nearly all of the policy actors mentioned a few basic challenges: low demand for policy information, low levels of education and high levels of illiteracy (particularly English-language illiteracy) among the general public.<sup>31</sup>

## In-Depth: Mapping Information Flows

These diagrams highlight the various paths through which policy information can flow between high-level policy actors and the Ghanaian public.



**Most interviewees listed a variety of creative oral outreach strategies to make policy concepts more interesting and accessible to the public.** Examples included the use of

community-specific musical events, meetings and celebrations, as well as awareness events featuring scripted subject matter that is acted out through drama or puppetry. One multilateral representative said:

*We work with musicians a lot, because [music] is a language that the people understand.... When people sing about corruption, sing about road safety, and those things, people understand the messages.*

Obviously, delivering messages in 10 or 20 Ghanaian languages is more costly than a single national campaign in English.

Although English is the country's official language, it is not the most widely understood in many rural areas. (For example, in the AudienceScapes quantitative survey in Ghana, only half of rural respondents said they speak and understand English, versus 72 percent of urban respondents). Perhaps development groups can provide assistance to underwrite multilingual programs.

A ministry official involved in health issues described the challenges of trying to deliver messages about nutrition nationwide:

*We have a budget where we want to [reach] people who can speak most of our... local dialects, [and to get] radio programs to take this up. So, one basic problem is cost.*

*Several complained that citizens do not understand the details of what happens in parliament or in government agencies, suggesting a possible role for civic education programs to encourage participation.*

**Even if information hurdles are cleared, policy actors warned that much of the public will still be poorly equipped to truly understand many policy issues.**

For more technical issues in particular, making information available is not the same as making it truly accessible and understandable. Said one ministry official:

*If you... go on radio, and you're talking to the Ghanaian public about the WTO negotiations in Ghana, and what you are doing regarding tariff negotiations in agriculture, non-agriculture...of course, you're wasting your time there.*

*It must be a selected group of people who understand these issues.*

**Policy actors commented that there is also a need to improve Ghanaians' understanding of the policy process itself.** Notably, several complained that citizens do not understand the details of what happens in parliament or in government agencies, suggesting a possible need to support civic education programs to encourage participation.

## **II. Inclusion of Other Development Stakeholders**

**Nearly all of the interviewees said their organizations hold broad consultative meetings with stakeholders as part of the policy process.** Given that the executive branch is primarily responsible for initiating policy, government ministries said they try to reach out to stakeholders early in the process.

Parliamentary committees also seek stakeholder input during the drafting and revision of bills, and policy influencers reported organizing consultations among their own constituents as well as participating in government-sponsored consultations as the representatives of those constituents.

Stakeholder consultations tend to take one of three forms:

- focused workshops to which specific groups are invited;
- community meetings (for example, when a program is being implemented locally);
- and, occasionally, large public forums.

Although the specific stakeholders vary by policy area, those most likely to be invited to consultations are well-organized civil society groups, business and labor associations, traditional authorities, religious groups (in some cases), and the global development partners

*One possible role for aid organizations might be to provide the means for such underrepresented constituencies to have more of a voice in the policy process.*

discussed in Section 2.2. Written documents (for example, a draft policy) are sometimes available in advance, and written comments will be accepted, but the main form of input comes via questions and discussion at these workshops and meetings.

**Some policy actors voiced doubts about whether such formal stakeholder consultations yield meaningful public input.** As

described above, meetings and workshops are a costly way of sharing policy information, both in terms of time and money. They must necessarily be limited in the number of invitations, and cannot

draw on the full richness of public opinion. For national issues in particular, it is deemed challenging to bring a truly representative group of stakeholders together in a single place for face-to-face consultations.

**Policymakers rely on organized groups to represent various views, putting stakeholders who are unable to organize themselves at a disadvantage in the policy process.** Direct program recipients, such as youth, people living with HIV/AIDS, local entrepreneurs, or dispersed rural communities, may therefore have less voice in policy matters than better organized interests such as business associations. *Thus, one possible role for aid organizations might be to provide the means for such underrepresented constituencies to have more of a voice in the policy process.*

### III. Feedback on Policy Performance

While policy actors said that gathering input during the policy design phase can be challenging, they added that Ghanaians generally are quick to find ways to provide feedback after policies have been developed and implemented—particularly to express dissatisfaction with the results.

Democracy of course provides a formal outlet for public approval or frustration through the ballot box. Other organized feedback mechanisms include workshops and community meetings akin to the stakeholder consultations in the policy development phase; the radio call-in shows previously mentioned; and a limited number of surveys (mainly in the case of business associations gathering input from their members). Informally, individuals express their views to policymakers on the street, at social events such as durbars and funerals, and through local contacts of politicians.

**One senior politician said *focus groups* have been discussed as a way of receiving policy feedback from stakeholders in a more structured way, but that these were not used in his policy areas. In addition, none of the interviewees mentioned the use of online or cell phone-based survey methods for collecting feedback.**

### 2.4 Structural Challenges to Gathering the Right Policy Information

Although this research project focused on the paths and flows of policy information, another set of related issues loomed large in discussions



with policymakers and influencers: the shortcomings they encounter in policy-relevant data, knowledge management systems and administrative support. Such issues typically feature in research focused on official capacity building, but they have a strong bearing on the information environment and are worth highlighting here.

**The argument put forth by policymakers and influencers is that improved information flows are only as good as the information flowing through them; constraints in both areas need to be addressed simultaneously to arrive at better policy outcomes.** Furthermore, Ghanaian policy actors see many ways in which development donors and implementers could do so (as listed in Chapter 3). To summarize the structural issues:

- Despite multiple sources of information, it is very difficult to get the appropriate hard data to inform the policy process and make strategic choices.
- Even when data, analysis or historical precedent exists, weak information

management systems in many organizations limit the extent to which they are used to improve development outcomes.

- Policymakers' thin support structures further exacerbate these problems.

### ***I. Insufficient Development Data***

Typically, policy actors seek hard data from domestic government agencies, research publications (often commissioned by international organizations), and any available third-party data or research gathered online. But they complained that these sources fall short in delivering the range of national data needed for evidence-based policy formulation and evaluation.

Interviewees expressed disappointment that few external sources gather detailed data about Ghana, and that the country's government agencies lack the budgets or capability to collect their own; even when they do so, structural barriers inhibit the data's access by other agencies.

*More data is needed on the domestic economy, social indicators and technology use trends for use by policy actors.*

In particular, **some policy actors highlighted the lack of detailed data on the Ghanaian economy, on social indicators, and on technology use trends among the public. They also expressed a strong need for these types of data to be disaggregated by gender and other key demographic categories.**

One ministry official gave the example of problems faced when considering interventions aimed at women and children involved in cocoa-farming, Ghana's largest cash crop sector:

*I find out that when they are collecting the data, even notable organization[s],... just collect [the] number of farmers... but they don't desegregate [sic] according to men and women. So when you are talking about problems of women or gender or children involved in cocoa, you don't know. So that is our biggest setback—lack of gender desegregated data. Because if you are going to talk about the need for women to have greater access to micro-credit or... bank loans, what is the basis?*

*You go to the Labor Department now and look at the condition of the place. It's appalling. You can't expect anything to come out of there .... Before you can even look at ... statistics you need to strengthen the institution that is responsible [for gathering them]. -Business group representative*

*... Every agency has its own problem so far as information is concerned. [What you need is] a central point where you have data coordinated by say the Ghana Statistical Service, then it will help.... [C]ertainly, ...we collaborate but it becomes difficult because we all experience ... similar constraint[s]- Official involved in development planning*



**Even with the brisk expansion of mobile phones and an improving road network, the**

**ability to transmit relevant information from remote rural areas to policymaking centers remains spotty.** For example, in the health field, a ministry official noted that district-level branch offices keep track of what is happening in individual communities throughout the country, “where the development takes place.” But when you want information collected by the districts, “it takes time before you get the information because of the distance.” The concern is that even if requests can be made quickly and easily, the real information about development activities still takes too long to reach national-level policymakers.

**Policy actors warned of undesirable consequences when critical data are lacking: important development decisions may then be based on less solid foundations, including political and personal agendas.** One senior politician recounted a telling hypothetical example about deciding where to invest scarce infrastructure funds for rural roads. Ideally, he said, the decision should be determined by which route is likely to make the best contribution to Ghana’s national development, based on social data, agricultural production data and other key statistics:

*But because I don’t have the data, I don’t have the capacity to make the [proper] analysis which would give me the possibility to make informed choices. So don’t be shocked if all the roads go to Cape Coast (I hear the president is from Cape Coast!), just like all the roads led to Kumasi in the previous administration [A reference to the previous president of Ghana, John Kufuor, who was from Kumasi]. How can you blame them, because we don’t have the information to make informed choices?*

In other words, without better data collection and coordination, development policy debates can easily devolve into special-interest resource grabs.

## **II. Weak Information Systems**

**The policy community says it wants more of certain types of information but also feels ill-equipped to process the volume of information already available.** As one senior minister noted: “Sometimes you get drowned” by the range of information coming in.

**This weak information management takes three main forms: individual capacity, organizational capacity and the preservation of institutional memory at higher levels of government.**

### **Individual Capacity**

Individually, many policymakers struggle to process increasing volumes of information, particularly given their often limited support staff and their strong preference to cross-check sources.

High-level policymakers often receive full reports that they do not have time to review, when summaries or concise analyses would be sufficient. The problem seems to be more acute for parliamentarians and business leaders than members of government ministries or international organizations, but most interviewees expressed some level of concern about having limited time to review information.

A ministry official said that, although quarterly reports from regional offices and foreign missions are slow in arriving, he does not complain about their timeliness because it means that their arrivals are staggered. “If I get everything coming in bulk at once, it might create a bit of a problem for me [to read them all],” he noted.

Part of the problem comes down to lack of physical resources. For example, **Ghana’s parliamentarians do not have offices at the parliament building where they can privately meet colleagues and constituents, review documents, or draft bills and reports.** (Indeed, this even posed a challenge when arranging interviews with them for this study). **In other organizations, many individuals reported using the internet at home because their office internet connections are too slow or unreliable** to allow any meaningful work. Business associations say their use of new technology is also constrained: although they have taken advantage of electronic communication to a great extent, they find that most of their members (business owners throughout Ghana) can only access email at internet cafés because they do not have access at their businesses.

### **Organizational and Storage Capacity**

Policymakers face what one senior administration advisor described as “[a] very archaic document storage system... I mean, you go to a ministry, you see physical piles on somebody’s desk.” **Even when information about a particular policy issue exists—data, a policy memo, a past precedent—it frequently cannot be located.** Interviewees reported that in many agencies, recordkeeping and archiving are rudimentary if they exist at all. Having electronic archives in all agencies would be very helpful, according to two presidential advisors.

In principle, the Ghana Statistical Service can serve as a central depository for many types of development policy information; it already has the legal authority to do so. But based on policymakers’ current assessment of the supporting infrastructure, there may not be sufficient space, staff, and computer hardware and software to do so effectively.<sup>32</sup>

### **Institutional Memory**

Finally, interviewees said that **institutional memory in government has been weak in part because of mistrust between rival political parties.** In describing the recent transition from a New Patriotic Party (NPP) presidential administration to a National Democratic Congress (NDC) administration, a senior administration advisor also pointed out the lack of systems to ensure that key information is passed on (noting that this had also been a problem when power was previously transferred from NDC to NPP).

The advisor said that records kept by the local UN Development Programme office were able to fill gaps where the previous administration did not hand over records, but such backup services are not always available. Increasing specific agencies' capacity to develop archives would help, but the problem seems to run deeper, reflecting a fractured political climate.

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## In-Depth: Mapping the Sources of Informed Decision-making

The policy community's sources of information can be mapped according to their type (traditional media, new technology, or direct contact with individuals and institutions), their purpose (to monitor news and the public agenda, to provide input for policy design, implementation, and evaluation, or to educate the public), and the manner in which they are typically used:

Traditional Media	Primary Outlets/Sources	Use in Monitoring News & Public Agenda	Use in Policy Design, Implementation, & Evaluation	Use in Public Awareness & Education
Newspapers	Daily Graphic, Ghanaian Times	Skim multiple papers for key stories.	Monitor public opinion.	Grant interviews, send press releases, invite journalists to events.
Radio	Joy FM, Radio Gold, Peace FM, Unique FM, Citi FM	Listen to news headline reviews.	Participate in call-in shows to gauge public opinion.	Grant interviews, send press releases, participate in call-in shows, buy airtime to deliver messages, invite journalists to events.
Television	Local: GTV, TV3, Metro International: CNN, BBC	Watch int'l coverage of world events, occasionally watch local news.	Monitor world events.	Grant interviews, send press releases, invite journalists to events.

New Technologies	Primary Outlets/Sources	Use in Monitoring News & Public Agenda	Use in Policy Design, Implementation, & Evaluation	Use in Public Awareness & Education
Internet	Ghanaweb.com, MyJoyOnline.com, Google, Yahoo!	Browse Ghanaweb.com and MyJoyOnline.com for news summaries, cross-check information.	Search for resources from international organizations, or examples of other countries' policies, cross-check information.	Post information on agency website (where available).
Email	n/a	Receive information from listservs (somewhat rare)	Request documents, set up meetings, ask specific questions of colleagues/experts.	Send updates to colleagues, members (of associations), stakeholders (if possible).
Mobile Phones	n/a	Receive calls from constituents with reports of local events, cross-check information.	Request documents, set up meetings, ask specific questions of colleagues/experts, cross-check information, receive feedback from constituents.	n/a

<b>Individuals and Institutions</b>	<b>Primary Outlets/Sources</b>	<b>Use in Monitoring Public Agenda, Policy Design, Implementation, &amp; Evaluation</b>	<b>Use in Public Awareness &amp; Education</b>
Written Documents	Colleagues, International NGOs, Multilateral Donors, Bilateral Donors, District-level Offices	Convey opinions and policy briefs, request information, keep records of meetings, provide research results, draft policy documents, provide comments on policy drafts, provide reports of activities.	Publicize policy decisions, inform stakeholders about policy issues.
Stakeholder Consultations	Civil Society, Local NGOs, Traditional Authorities, Business Associations, International NGOs, Multilateral Donors, Bilateral Donors	Solicit input on draft policies, receive feedback on policy implementation.	n/a
Meetings & Briefings	Colleagues, International NGOs, Multilateral Donors, Bilateral Donors, Business Associations	Ask specific questions, seek advice on policy design, monitor progress of implementation, report on activities, discuss strategy, review feedback.	Inform key individuals/ institutions about policy issues.
Workshops	Colleagues, International NGOs, Multilateral Donors, Bilateral Donors, Business Associations	Learn about policy issues, report on activities, evaluate programs.	Educate journalists and stakeholders about policy issues.
Social Visits	Colleagues, Constituents, Traditional Authorities, Local Experts	Monitor the “word on the street.” Informally ask specific questions, request expedited documents, cross-check information.	Inform public or key individuals about policy issues.
Events	Civil Society, Local NGOs, Traditional Authorities, Business Associations, International NGOs, Multilateral Donors, Bilateral Donors, District-level Offices	Receive appeals from grassroots level at durbars.	Create awareness about policy issues with creative strategies like dramatization, draw media attention to policy issues, inform public about policy issues.

## Chapter 3. Recommendations for the International Development Community



*The picture of Ghana's policy environment sketched in the in-depth interviews reveals several ways in which global development organizations and other stakeholders can better interact with and assist Ghanaian policy actors, with a view toward promoting constructive policies and improving development outcomes.*

## ***I. Contribute More Effectively to the Policy Debate***

Six key points arose from our discussions with policy actors that can help development partners more effectively navigate the current policy environment and make useful contributions to policy debates:

- **Understand the national political culture, in which personal connections play an important role, and policymakers face intense public expectations and limited time.**

Policy actors repeatedly mentioned their reliance on friends and contacts to circumvent slower formal channels; it is therefore vital for development groups to expand their definition of “influentials” to include these broader personal networks, and to tap into them whenever possible.

Time is also of the essence when it comes to policy dialogue. Commenting on their schedules, interviewees cited not only their work, but broader expectations from the public about their roles. Several indicated that citizens make appeals for assistance on personal matters as or more often than appeals for policy-related action. This adds an additional burden for already taxed policymakers, arguing for brevity, efficiency and convenience when interacting with them.

*It is vital for development groups to expand their definition of “influentials” to include broader personal networks, and to tap into them whenever possible.*

- **Understand the existing conduits of policy information**

Local media are seen as the primary source for determining which issues are on (or should be on) the public agenda—despite policy actors’ criticisms about local media content and coverage. Staying abreast of, and remaining conversant in, the flow of information from these media sources is critical to speaking credibly about trends in policy issues. In addition, getting a story picked up by domestic radio and newspapers may help put an issue onto policymakers’ and influencers’ radar screens.

Key media outlets monitored by policy actors include radio (particularly Joy FM, Radio Gold, Peace FM, Unique FM, and Citi FM), newspapers (especially the *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*), international news stations (CNN, BBC), and to a lesser extent Ghanaian television (GTV, TV3, Metro).

For input on particular policy issues, a prominent policy influencer recommended working through an established organization rather than approaching politicians individually. He argued that they place more weight on information that is seen to represent the view of a broad coalition or array of interested parties rather than a single individual or institution.

- **Cater to policy actors’ need to perform due diligence on information and their hunger for examples of best practice elsewhere.**

As previously mentioned, members of the policy community stress the need to cross-check and verify the information they receive, regardless of the source. The most helpful information, therefore, comes from a known and trusted source which can be readily corroborated by one or more other sources. Thus, development actors seeking to make their views known would benefit from first finding trusted allies who can corroborate their views before presenting them to policymakers.

A related strategy: bolster an argument with relevant examples from other countries, showing that similar approaches have worked or are being used, thus providing credible evidence of likely development outcomes from a proposed policy change. In general, making comparative and well-analyzed project information readily available to policy actors is a wise practice.

- **Use preferred formats for presenting information—notably (though not exclusively) concise written or text briefs that summarize key points, complemented by face-to-face meetings.**

With policymakers so pressed for time, it is incumbent upon development groups to make sure information is presented to them in the most manageable format possible. A large majority of interviewees expressed a personal preference for concise written documents so that they can make notes and keep a record of



what has been presented. There was no consensus on whether hard copies or digital formats are more manageable, in part because interviewees’ quality of internet access varies widely.

**There was nearly unanimous demand for brevity,** however. Larger briefings and meetings were frequently cited as common or effective, but not as preferred means of receiving information; having a short written document to take away from a meeting seemed to increase its usefulness.

- **Contribute at the right time—preferably, early in the policy process.**

Most policy actors agreed that the earlier information is provided, the better. This implies that information supplied to the executive branch (which typically initiates legislative or regulatory action) can help when issues are just entering the public agenda. Parliamentarians, meanwhile, said they need information as soon as they begin to draft and revise the details of bills on subjects initiated by the executive branch.

One parliamentarian complained that he often receives input too close to decision-making deadlines for it to be useful. Instead, information early in the parliamentary session and in the life of a particular bill would be more helpful. Since formal stakeholder consultations provide one of the primary means of reviewing draft policies, they could be a useful time to provide input.

- **Facilitate connections between grassroots implementers and high-level policymakers wherever possible.**

Several policymakers suggested that development organizations, particularly NGOs,

could play a larger role in helping to provide a voice for relatively unorganized segments of the population (such as youth) in the policy process. Organizations that have connections both to grassroots implementers and high-level policymakers and influencers could help build stronger bridges between the two and ensure that community-level concerns are raised via a credible channel. Meanwhile, investments in organizational management training and ICT resources could address the related problem of slow communication between government agencies' headquarters and district-level offices.

One model for this "intermediary" style of advocacy is the work of business associations,

### **In-Depth: Lessons from Policy Influencers**

The four interviewees outside of government spoke directly to their experiences providing information to help shape development policy in Ghana. The most successful methods described by them included:

**Hold regular meetings or briefings with upper-level executives or ministry staff to help set the policy agenda.** Interviewees reported that monthly or other regular meetings provide an opportunity to stay informed and also to provide input early enough in the policy design process to have an impact.

**Be patient but persistent about grabbing decision makers' attention.** Knowing that politicians and government staff are always pressed for time, "you take your time, find the right time... [even if] sometimes it becomes expensive to sort out, because you have to take them out of Accra" for special meetings and programs.

**Act as the single, unified voice of a particular constituency.** For the two business organizations, they believe the reason they have the ear of policymakers is that they are the recognized representatives of a large interest group. They debate and resolve issues within the membership first, and then present a unified front to policymakers.

**Cooperate with other development organizations.** A representative of a global development organization warned that part of the overload drowning government officials stems from a lack of harmonization among development groups: "We are tearing [government officials] into pieces. [Our requests take] so much time, they don't even have time to do their own things, so that's a challenge."

whose members are spread across the country but work through national-level representatives to influence policy.

**Another option might be to conduct focus groups or other types of “market” research on specific policy issues at the grassroots level,** as a presidential advisor proposed, and report the results to the relevant government agency.

## ***II. Improving the Policy Information Environment***

As described above, Ghanaian policy actors said they face numerous structural impediments to effective policy communication. Some suggested interventions:

- **Fill the data gap.**

The need for better data could be met through more accessible and targeted research on Ghana, including raw economic, social and technological data that are disaggregated by key demographics such as gender, age or region. At the same time, the capacity of Ghanaian institutions to collect data themselves could be improved through training in research methodology or investment in technology. Filling the data gap would then allow decision makers to better analyze and weigh their many options.

- **Bolster information management.**

In addition to the data gap, interviewees highlighted the prevalence of weak information management systems throughout the policy community. The idea of a centralized depository for development data could be realized through improved capacity at the Ghana Statistical

### **In-Depth: Investing in Supporting Infrastructure**

One parliamentarian suggested that upfront investments in better supporting infrastructure could actually save resources in the long run. For example, for capacity building in government, he argued that instead of paying for every individual to stay in a hotel and attend a training course in a central location, “you could as well use that money to install internet services for people, where you can even have video conferencing and we can ask questions from the lecturer, take notes.” He went on, “This idea of everyday ... printing these booklets? Do you know how much this one will cost parliament, the taxpayer? [*holds up some documents*]. If we had [digital] copies, just put copies on everybody’s ... [computer], just put one copy for ... the public view or at our library here for public [view].... Do you know how much we would be saving this nation? ...But this doesn’t seem to be what everybody is thinking about.”

Service. Better archival systems (such as electronic archiving) require investments that, Ghanaian policymakers suggested, are not likely to come from the government budget.

- **Invest in supporting infrastructure and organizational capacity.**

Additional supporting infrastructure and capacity-building should focus on the areas highlighted by interviewees: office, administrative and research support for parliamentarians; faster reporting from remote areas; and better processes for preserving institutional memory at the highest levels of

government. Programs in these areas might focus on a particular agency or work to improve practices and capacity horizontally.

- **Help policymakers disseminate information by developing materials that are accessible to illiterate members of the public and that attract others who have not previously engaged in the policy process.**

The need for creative strategies to provide policy information to the public was stressed by interviewees. Development organizations with experience in other countries can share strategies that have been effective in other locations. They can also ensure that the **policy information they provide can be easily**

**adapted to a general audience, perhaps saving policymakers time by presenting both a high-level technical summary and a summary in layman's terms.** One option mentioned: more support for community radio stations that allow community members to discuss development issues in their local language.

- **Support the training of skilled, impartial journalists.**

Two ministry officials reported having supported training for journalists to improve the quality of reporting on their particular sectors. Given widespread complaints about the accuracy and impartiality of local news reports, such targeted training would be useful on a larger scale.

## A Note on Research Methods and Next Steps



*As mentioned in the Introduction, the in-depth interviews with Ghanaian policymakers and influencers were aimed at describing the ecology of policy information flows in the country, with a view toward helping global development organizations and other stakeholders understand how best to participate in those flows.*

*The primary operational challenge to such research was the difficulty of convincing busy senior officials in government and other major organizations that their time would be well spent in hour-long discussions on such a topic, and that the output of the research would not risk harming them professionally. What's more, the interviews were often disrupted by pressing urgent matters that would either cut short the proceedings or force them to be rescheduled (sometimes repeatedly).*

*Nevertheless, the AudienceScapes researchers found the 15 participants to be supportive of the aims of the project, extremely cooperative with the process, and forthcoming in the interviews. Based on the tapes and transcripts produced, the analysis team concluded that this research format succeeded in eliciting honest, insightful and relevant commentary from the subjects, thus providing insiders' views on how policy actors use, assess, share and disseminate essential information for work purposes.*

What's more, name anonymity clearly allowed the subjects to be more open or critical than they might have been on the record regarding problems and shortcomings they perceived in the policy information arena, and regarding positive or negative characteristics of various actors therein. The subjects' answers to common interview questions also contained enough parallels to allow the researchers to draw some broad conclusions (as listed in Chapter 3).

In ideal conditions, to provide a 360 degree view on policy information and ensure that the research focuses on the points that are most relevant to the development community, it would be helpful to expand the research model to include the following:

- Focus group discussions with international development officials and other key stakeholders active in the country to discuss their experiences of providing information in the policy arena, and to pinpoint what they view as assets and shortcomings of the current domestic policy process.
- Case studies of how information flows influenced a given policy-formulation experience (for example, the creation of a new program to promote youth employment, or to expand primary health care services to rural areas), to provide real-world examples of the current state of affairs in the policy arena.

- Further analysis of how the various types of domestic stakeholders (such as business groups, religious groups, citizens' groups, local NGOs) interact with each other and either ally or compete for influence on policy issues.

Even without these additional elements, the in-depth interviews with policy actors provide a valuable window on what makes the policy process tick in African countries and the dynamics among the various policy players. We encourage the expansion of this project to more countries, particularly to those with political systems that differ markedly from well-entrenched representative democracies, to see how information flows change under different power structures.

Follow-up research is also important. Annual (or, at the very least, biannual) updates are needed in previously researched countries to keep abreast of evolutions of domestic political climates, leadership structures, media availability, ICT availability and the creation or elimination of various nongovernmental organizations. Regular updates would also provide the opportunity for trend analysis of how policy information flows are changing over time, opening the door for projecting future trends and tracking the evolution of policy initiatives in particular development areas.

## Appendix A: In-Depth Interview Questionnaire

1. To what extent, and in what ways, have your daily habits of gathering news and information changed recently, for example over the past two to three years?
2. How have your sources of news and information changed over this period, or become more or less important to you? Why?
3. Going through your typical work day, can you describe your routines of gathering news and information?
4. Think about the policy process. Can you say when in this process it is best for interested parties to provide you with information about an issue? In other words, at what point in the process are you most in need of information or seek it?
5. Generally speaking, what form is it most convenient for you to receive information from interested parties to help you make policy decisions? (i.e., written briefs, video/TV, discussions with co-workers and advisors, SMS messages, email). What form do you find easiest to absorb when you are pressed for time?
6. What information needs do you have as a policy-maker (*or policy influencer if not in the government*) that are not being met?
7. What improvements would you like to see in the availability and quality of news and information in your work?
8. How well do you think the media cover issues that are most relevant to your policy work in Ghana? Please differentiate between Ghanaian media outlets and international media outlets.
9. I am going to go through a list of various types of Ghanaian organizations that have a stake in development issues. Can you tell me how useful to you are exchanges of information with these groups regarding development issues you focus on? 1. Local NGOs; 2. Business groups; 3. Citizens' groups; 4. religious groups
10. Now I will go through a list of various types of international organizations that have a stake in development issues you focus on? Can you tell me how useful to you are exchanges of information with these groups regarding development issues? 1. International NGOs; 2. The World Bank and other development banks; 3. UN agencies; 4. Large foundations focused on development; 5. Bilateral development agencies.
11. In what ways do you or your organization make policy-related news and information available to the general public? If possible, can you give examples?
12. Do you or your organization face any particular challenges in communicating policy information to the general public?
13. How do you get feedback from the public on your policies and programs? Which channels and strategies do you normally use? Please provide some examples.
14. How well informed do you think the general public is on the issues you work on? Why?
15. Do you think the increasing availability of mobile phones and other communication technologies will change the way that you and your organization communicate in the future? If so, how?
16. These are all the questions I have for you. Is there anything I should have asked you about that you would like to discuss?

## **Appendix B: List of agencies and organizations from which interviewees were selected**

### **GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES OR AGENCIES**

- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Trade and Industry
- Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education
- National Development Planning Commission

### **PRESIDENTIAL ADVISORS**

- Economic Advisory Council
- Manifesto Implementation Wing of the Policy Unit

### **PARLIAMENTARIANS**

- Parliamentary Select Committee on Education
- Parliamentary Select Committee on Communication
- Parliamentary Select Committee on Finance

### **DONOR AGENCIES/INTERNATIONAL NGOS**

- World Health Organization
- World Bank

### **BUSINESS LEADERS OR OTHER LEADING CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS**

- Ghana Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Association of Ghana Industries

## Appendix C: The AudienceScapes Research Team for Ghana

**Hannah Bowen** is a Research Analyst at InterMedia and the primary author of this report. Hannah earned a BA at Yale University and a MA in International Development from the Kennedy School at Harvard University. She spent two years with the Peace Corps in Ghana, focusing on ecotourism development, and she worked with the UN World Food Program in Guinea-Bissau on project monitoring and evaluation. She has also worked with Oxfam America.

**Dr. Joachim Bruess** is the Research Director of InterMedia and is in charge of research activities for the AudienceScapes project. Joachim has a MA and a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Bielefeld in Germany. He has more than 12 years experience in statistical analysis, demography and migration studies. He has designed, budgeted, organized, and directed research projects for the National Committee for Quality Assurance and AARP, and for the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Social Conflict and Violence at the University of Bielefeld.

**Peter Goldstein** is the Project Director for AudienceScapes. He contributed to this report. Peter holds a MA in African Studies from Johns Hopkins University's Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, and a BA in Politics from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Peter was previously a journalist with Kiplinger in the U.S., and Dow Jones & Co., and the Wall Street Journal in Europe.

**Dr. Raul Roman** is a Senior Project Manager at InterMedia and a research advisor on the AudienceScapes project. He has MS and Ph.D. degrees in Communication and International Development from Cornell University, and he is an adjunct professor at the Johns Hopkins Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. Raul brings a decade of experience as a research and strategy consultant in communication and international development programs in more than 20 countries in South Asia, Latin America, and Africa. He has served as a consultant for international organizations (such as UNESCO, FAO, USAID, and Rockefeller Foundation, among others), governments, companies (such as Microsoft and Intel), and research institutions.

**Aylin Talgar Pietz** is a consultant with InterMedia and the Ghana project manager for AudienceScapes. Aylin has a MA in Public Administration from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University. She has been with InterMedia since 2004, managing research projects globally, with a specialization in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Statement by the White House Press Secretary on Upcoming Travel by the President, The White House Office of the Press Secretary, 16 May 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Information for this section drawn from the CIA World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html>.

<sup>3</sup> "Political Parties in Ghana through Four Republics: A Path to Democratic Consolidation," Minion K.C. Morrison. *Comparative Politics*. Vol. 36, No. 4 (July 2004), p. 423-424

<sup>4</sup> *World Development Indicators Database*, The World Bank Group, April 2009

<sup>5</sup> GNI per capita, PPP terms, 2008. *2009 World Population Data Sheet*. Population Reference Bureau, 2009. P.14.

<sup>6</sup> "Assessing Progress in Africa towards the Millennium Development Goals Report 2008," *First Joint Annual Meetings of the AU Conference on Ministers of Economy and Finance and ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development*, 6 March 2008. <http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2008/docs/AssessingProgressinAfricaMDGs.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> *World Development Indicators Database*. The World Bank Group, April 2009.

<sup>8</sup> *Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) 2006-2009*. Republic of Ghana, National Development Planning Commission, November 2005.

<sup>9</sup> "The Platform," *National Democratic Congress Official Campaign Site*. <http://www.attamills2008.com>.

<sup>10</sup> *World Development Indicators Database*. The World Bank Group, April 2009.

<sup>11</sup> *2008 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration: Making Aid More Effective by 2010*. OECD, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> *Freedom of the Press Index, 2008*. Freedom House, <http://www.freedomhouse.org>.

<sup>13</sup> *Country Profile: Ghana*. BBC, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country\\_profiles/1023355.stm#media](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1023355.stm#media).

<sup>14</sup> *Freedom of the Press Index, 2008*. Freedom House, <http://www.freedomhouse.org>.

<sup>15</sup> Lewis, M. Paul (ed.), 2009. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, Sixteenth edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com/>.

<sup>16</sup> "Languages," Ghanaweb. <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/tribes/languages.php>

<sup>17</sup> Associations include the Ghana Journalists' Association, Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association, Ghana Community Radio Network, Institute of Public Relations, Advertisers Association of Ghana, Film Makers Guild, Association of Women in the Media, Women in Broadcasting, Internet Society of Ghana, West Africa Journalists Association, Sports Writers Association of Ghana, Sports Broadcasters Association, Environmental Club of Journalists, Economic and Financial News Reporters Association, Association of Past Broadcasters, Communication Workers Union, and Ghana Association of Writers. *MSI Africa 2008: Ghana*. International Research & Exchanges Board, [http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI\\_Africa/2008/ghana.asp](http://www.irex.org/programs/MSI_Africa/2008/ghana.asp).

<sup>18</sup> *World Development Indicators Database*, The World Bank Group, April 2009.

<sup>19</sup> AudienceScapes survey of Ghana, July-August 2009.

<sup>20</sup> *Information Society Statistical Profiles 2009: Africa*. International Telecommunication Union, 2009. p. 30.

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<sup>21</sup> *Information Society Statistical Profiles 2009: Africa*. International Telecommunication Union, 2009. p. 57.

<sup>22</sup> "Acquisition of a 70% Stake in Ghana Telecom," Vodaphone Press Release, 3 July 2008. [http://www.vodafone.com/start/media\\_relations/news/group\\_press\\_releases/2007/acquisition\\_of\\_a\\_70.html](http://www.vodafone.com/start/media_relations/news/group_press_releases/2007/acquisition_of_a_70.html).

<sup>23</sup> "Globacom Lays Underground Cables in Ghana," IT News Africa, 24 August 2009; and "Mobile Money in Ghana Thanks to MTN," IT News Africa, 24 July 2009. <http://www.itnewsafrika.com/>

<sup>24</sup> Only 1.8 percent of Ghanaians had an internet connection in their household in 2007, according the International Telecommunications Union's *Information Society Statistical Profiles 2009: Africa*.

<sup>25</sup> The World Bank estimated the monthly broadband Internet access tariff in 2008 to be \$64 (World Development Indicators, April 2009).

<sup>26</sup> "Background," About GhanaWeb. <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/aboutus.php>

<sup>27</sup> At \$0.07, an SMS text message is less than half the cost of the least expensive one-minute voice call (\$0.16 for one minute on-network during off-peak hours). Calls placed during peak hours run as high as \$0.26 per minute. Cost estimates, measured in 2008 purchasing power parity dollars, were obtained from [www.mobileactive.org](http://www.mobileactive.org).

<sup>28</sup> Interviewees mentioned exchanging development information with multilateral institutions including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, United Nations agencies (UNDP, FAO, WFP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, and UNIDO), World Trade Organization, African Development Bank, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). They also reported working with donors such as the US Agency for International Development, DFID, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Danish International Development Agency, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Embassy of the Netherlands.

<sup>29</sup> Policymakers listed a number of international NGOs with whom they have worked on projects or from whom they have sought policy advice, including World Vision, Action Aid, Care International, Oxfam International, Plan International, Troppenbost, SEND International, ADRA, and Third World Network.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted directly from interviewer's detailed notes from unrecorded interview. Subject did not agree to have interview recorded.

<sup>31</sup> In 2007, UNESCO estimated that only 58.3 percent of Ghanaian women over 15 were literate, and 71.7 percent of men over 15. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, [www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org).

<sup>32</sup> "The Law specifically: provides for a Board to be the overall governing body to determine the form and nature of statistics to be collected and reported on, promote the effective use of statistics, stimulate research activities in all fields of statistics and advise the government on all matters relating to statistics; vests in the Government Statistician the responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the GSS, the conduct of national surveys including censuses, and organization of a coordinated scheme of economic and social statistics relating to the country; vests in the GSS the responsibility for the collection, compilation, analysis, publication and dissemination of official statistics in Ghana for general and administrative purposes; prescribes for the GSS the role of coordination of all developments in statistics outside the GSS."

From "About Us," Ghana Statistical Service webpage, <http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/AboutUs.html>.