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# Communicating Development Cooperation to Domestic Audiences

Approaches and Implications for  
South-South Cooperation Providers



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Cooperation to Domestic Audiences**  
Approaches and Implications for South-South  
Cooperation Providers

UNDP China

2017

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# Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>ABC</b>	Brazilian Cooperation Agency
<b>AIIB</b>	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
<b>BRI</b>	Belt and Road Initiative
<b>BRICS</b>	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
<b>CIDRN</b>	China International Development Research Network
<b>CIKD</b>	China Center for International Knowledge on Development
<b>Cobradi</b>	Brazilian Cooperation for International Development
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (UK)
<b>DGIS</b>	Directorate General for International Cooperation (Netherlands)
<b>DIRCO</b>	Department of International Relations and Cooperation (South Africa)
<b>DPA</b>	Development Partnership Administration (India)
<b>Eximbank</b>	Export-Import Bank (China)
<b>FIDC</b>	Forum on Indian Development Cooperation
<b>FOCAC</b>	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
<b>GNI</b>	gross national income
<b>IBSA</b>	India, Brazil and South Africa
<b>IDEA</b>	International Development Education Academy (South Korea)
<b>IDS</b>	Institute of Development Studies (UK)
<b>IPEA</b>	Institute of Applied Economic Research (Brazil)
<b>KEXIM</b>	Export-Import Bank of Korea
<b>KOICA</b>	Korea International Cooperation Agency
<b>MEA</b>	Ministry of External Affairs (India)
<b>MFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Netherlands)
<b>MOFCOM</b>	Ministry of Commerce (China)
<b>MRE</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Brazil)
<b>NCDO</b>	National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development (Netherlands)

<b>NCO</b>	National Committee for Development Education (Netherlands)
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>ODA</b>	official development assistance
<b>OECD-DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>RIS</b>	Research and Information System for Developing Countries (India)
<b>SCIO</b>	State Council Information Office (China)
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SSC</b>	South-South cooperation
<b>TIKA</b>	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme

# Executive summary

This study examines and compares development communication approaches of China, Brazil, India, the Netherlands, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, and the United Kingdom (UK), and particularly identifies relevance for China. It looks at how these countries, both South-South cooperation (SSC) providers and traditional development partners, communicate their international development cooperation to their domestic audiences, and examines the context and rationale for the various approaches. The study aims to share information for peer learning purposes, and attempts to provide practical recommendations to countries that wish to engage more in domestic communication, including China. The information was collected through desk research, interviews and written correspondence between May and August 2016.

The study finds that there are some common themes in how and why various countries choose to communicate their development cooperation to their domestic audiences. Each country responds to these themes in different ways according to its own circumstances. In some traditional development partner countries, the governments presume that the majority of their population have some pre-existing sense of moral obligation to poor people in other countries. They also share the belief that their citizens would simply expect to be informed about how their taxes are being spent. SSC providing countries share a different context. A common concern within some of the SSC providers is that their population would not think that expenditure on helping other countries is a wise use of money when their own countries are still facing many development challenges. These issues did arise in developed countries as well, but did not constitute a rationale for not communicating development cooperation.

Comparing the SSC providers and traditional development partners in this study, it is found that:

- In traditional development partner countries, the level of knowledge of poverty issues overseas and their government's development cooperation is generally low. In SSC providing countries, while poverty is no stranger to the population, the public's awareness of their government's development cooperation programmes generally remains limited. In addition, in many of the countries studied, the general public tends to overestimate their government's development cooperation budget (such as South Korea, Turkey, the Netherlands and the UK).
- While reasons for public support for aid vary across countries, some reoccurring themes among SSC providers include: solidarity; international influence/status; and in some cases, mutual (economic) benefit. These are in line with some of the common principles of SSC. For traditional development partners in this study, it is found that moral obligations tend to be the primary driver for providing aid, and to a lesser extent, self-interest. The population in both SSC providing and traditional development partner countries also share a few



common concerns with their country's development cooperation, including domestic development challenges and the effectiveness of development cooperation (such as Brazil, South Africa and the UK).

- All of the traditional development partner countries in this study have relatively well-developed strategies, institutional structures and tools for domestic communication, and have research results available to support policy-making on development cooperation communication. SSC providing countries in this study, by contrast, currently do not have such infrastructure for communication policy-making.
- For traditional development partners, their development communication strategies generally comprise two elements, to varying degrees: 1) development education – to create the context and rationale for development spending, and 2) development reporting – to account for the expenditure. Most SSC providers in this study currently focus their communication on reporting.
- Some common issues underpin SSC providers' current communication situation (such as Brazil, India and South Africa): low levels of public demand; sensitivity to domestic criticism; and issues related to data consistency and technical capacities. These countries also generally consider development cooperation as part of their foreign policy which is not readily open to public discussion/scrutiny.

The key message drawn from findings across countries is that **domestic communication about development cooperation needs to be context-specific if it is to be effective**. There are opportunities for SSC providing countries to communicate development cooperation in ways that could resonate with their domestic audiences and enhance public support. The study proposes five key points for SSC providers, and specifically for China to consider when developing a domestic communication strategy for development cooperation:

- **Be clear about the goals.** It is critical to be clear about the rationale for communicating development cooperation which will help shape the approach to communication. For China, a country still facing many domestic challenges, it is important to take into account the domestic development challenges and balance international expectations with domestic demands.
- **Understand the audience.** Communicators should develop a rich understanding of both public perceptions and attitudes, and how they have come to exist. However, despite the importance of attitudes, little research exists on how attitudes are formed. China could consider undertaking regular polling on public opinion on development cooperation which would be helpful for managing risks associated with communication.
- **Support an external orientation within the population.** To foster positive attitudes towards a government's development cooperation, some sense of connection, obligation

and responsibility to others beyond national boundaries is prerequisite. As such, development education, in addition to reporting on policies and programmes, may be useful in generating a broader understanding of the rationale for development cooperation. For China, one option is to use campaigns for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to share information on how China is supporting other countries' SDG implementation processes. In addition, China could explore various ways to tell stories about its overseas volunteer programme. Last but not least, China could enhance development education efforts by devising appropriate school curriculum.

- **Target the communication.** The content, mode of delivery, and institutional structure of communication need to be fashioned according to the targeted audiences. A clear plan is also necessary to determine the types of resources required to most effectively reach the desired audience and achieve the goals of communication. It is suggested that China's communication could emphasize five characteristics: morality, effectiveness, compliance, relevance and diplomacy, while different audiences should be targeted differently.
- **Review and revise.** It is important to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the communication strategy according to the criteria for success, and be prepared to adjust the strategy whenever needed. For China, it is important to test different communication approaches, and use evidence-based research results to support policy changes and pilot new initiatives while staying prepared to change and adapt based on lessons learned along the way.

There is little existing research on how SSC providers communicate their development cooperation to their domestic audiences, and the amount of information that could be marshalled for each country in this study is varied. As such, the study does not claim that its findings are conclusive, but rather, it provides an introductory overview for peer learning and lays the ground for further discussion and research.

# Introduction

## *Background of the study*

In recent years, a number of developing countries have become important South-South cooperation (SSC) providers.<sup>1</sup> While the scale and scope of their development cooperation is expanding, SSC providers still face persistent domestic development challenges, such as poverty, inequality, environmental degradation and problems that arise from rapid urbanization. As a result, there are often difficulties, both perceived and real, for SSC providers to communicate the intentions, results and benefits of their development cooperation programmes to their domestic audiences. While most members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have longer traditions of investing in domestic communication on development cooperation, such practices are less evident among SSC providers.

One example of is China. China is playing an increasingly important role as a development partner and has shown strong commitment to supporting developing countries' implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There has been increasing discussions in the Chinese media and among the general public about China's development cooperation, especially against the backdrop of Chinese announcements during the 2015 and 2016 United Nations (UN) Summit, the 2015 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), COP21 and the 2017 Belt and Road Forum.<sup>2</sup> These discussions illustrate the complexities of engaging the public around issues of the motivation, volume, distribution, and impact of China's development cooperation. In particular, the concern that poverty in China still needs to be addressed – a clear national priority for 2020 – comes to the fore.

Given the relatively limited amount of research on this topic, but increasing space for China and other countries to effectively communicate development cooperation to their domestic audiences, this study seeks to explore how selected SSC providers and traditional development partners engage in development communication, to see if any valuable lessons can be drawn. More specifically, it examines and compares the context and communication approaches of China and several other SSC providers faced with similar domestic development challenges as middle-income countries. It also looks at the experience of several traditional development

*1. Note on terminology: different countries prefer different terms to describe their international development cooperation. This report uses the term "traditional development partners" to describe OECD-DAC member countries, and "South-South cooperation" (SSC) providers for non-DAC or emerging development partners that are middle-income countries. It uses "development cooperation" for all development providers.*

*2. For a fuller list of China's commitments during 2015-2017, see Annex I.*

partners, which provides useful insights for SSC providers. The study concludes with specific recommendations that may be useful for countries that wish to improve their development cooperation communication domestically, with the hope that these could also feed into the Chinese government's current and future initiatives for enhancing domestic communication on development cooperation.

### **Communicating development cooperation to domestic audiences – a common challenge**

Many SSC providers are examining how they can better report on international development expenditure for transparency and accountability purposes. However, these governments face a common challenge: given the general public's concerns about their countries' domestic development, how could the government report on what they are spending without causing alarm among the population?<sup>3</sup> Research shows that, in many cases, the general public in these countries knows very little about poverty and development, yet hold strong views about government spending on overseas development. It is quite common that people may be supportive of poverty reduction in principle, but not regarding it as their responsibility. These are not unique in SSC providing countries – most countries have these concerns to some degree.<sup>4</sup> To overcome this quandary, some countries report on expenditure in very technical terms, which may not be of interest to their domestic population (for example, South Africa); some provide overall information without disaggregated data (such as China); others report in a clear and accessible manner so that their citizens can find information if they want to, but at the same time strongly emphasize development education<sup>5</sup> so that citizens feel the rationale for development cooperation is justified (for example, South Korea and the Netherlands). All in all, each country responds to the challenge of balancing communication with various audiences in its own way, such that there are opportunities for learning by reviewing the different contexts and approaches.

### **Research approach and limitations**

This report examines the “what”, “how” and “why” of various approaches taken to domestic communication in several SSC providing countries, namely, China, Brazil, India, South Africa and Turkey. These countries were selected based on their geographical diversity, similarities to China as middle-income countries, and their role as major SSC providers in terms of scale and scope of

3. This is also a growing concern in wealthier countries.

4. For example, the UK, as Henson et al. note in their 2010 report for the Institute of Development Studies *Public Perceptions of International Development and Support for Aid in the UK: Results of a Qualitative Enquiry*.

5. There are a number of definitions of “development education”. In order to distinguish it from development reporting for the purposes of this paper, I borrow from the definition of ‘global education’ from the Global Education Network of Europe: “education that opens people’s eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all”. See <http://gene.eu/about-gene/global-education/>.

development cooperation. It also looks at how some traditional development partners approach this issue. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom (UK) are useful comparators because of their relatively rich experience in development communication, and the different approaches they have taken over time. South Korea is also a useful case as it has only recently transitioned from a development assistance recipient to a provider, and has deliberately drawn on lessons learned from traditional development partners in its communication strategies. It also shares some cultural values with China.

The study is presented by country. In each of the country cases, a brief overview of the country's development cooperation is followed by a description of the social and political context within which development communication policies are developed and implemented. The bulk of the country cases provides an overview of the communication approaches currently in play, including available data, relevant institutional arrangements, and the role of the media (including social media), among other aspects.

Evidence on SSC providing countries in this study is largely based on the views of academics, NGO personnel, think tank analysts, local people, and, where possible, government officials. The information in the report was collected between May and August 2016 through desk research, interviews in person, Skype and phone calls, and written correspondence. The study is also based on the examination of English media and, where possible, media in other languages, particularly newspapers, official websites and public statements.

Due to resource constraints and the different approaches each country takes, the amount and type of information for each country is varied. And quotations should be seen as illustrative rather than representative. Efforts have been made to provide as many comparative details as possible. This study does not claim that its findings are conclusive, but rather, it presents the findings as an introductory overview from where more extensive and rigorous research can be conducted.

### ***The existing literature: links between communication, public awareness and public support***

Literature exists on development communication and public attitudes for OECD-DAC countries, but little for SSC providers.<sup>6</sup> As such, the existing literature tends to share a number of common assumptions.

Firstly, much of the literature assumes that “effective communication” will lead to increased public support for development cooperation and in turn, more effective development cooperation, and that causal links exist between “good” development communication, levels

6. With the exception of, for example, Czaplinska's 2007 paper which aims to provide useful information on how to build support for development cooperation for new European Union member states.

of public knowledge, and levels of public support for a country's development cooperation. For example, a number of OECD-DAC reports argue that "public engagement builds support and makes development policies more effective" and provide lessons and recommendations to do so (OECD, 2014). The UN recommends that development partners should spend 3 per cent of total development cooperation budget on awareness-raising activities as a means to build support, and ultimately improve the effectiveness of development cooperation, although the vast majority of countries' expenditure falls far below that mark (North-South Centre, 2003).

In fact, little is known about the relationship between communication, public awareness, support for development cooperation, and the effectiveness of development cooperation (Henson et al., 2013). Experience from traditional development partner countries such as the Netherlands and the UK shows how complicated any links are. Whether communication efforts lead to increased public awareness is debatable, and whether communication or awareness leads to more support is likewise questionable. To what extent the population's concern about poverty in the abstract can be correlated with support for a country's own development cooperation programme is therefore not clear (Henson et al., 2013).

In the UK, despite considerable efforts in development communication since 1997, public attitude tracking surveys by the Department for International Development (DFID) consistently show that around half of the population believe they know relatively little about international development challenges, or people's livelihood in developing countries (Henson et al., 2010). Similarly, rather than high levels of development awareness leading to higher levels of support, research suggests that in countries where support is reasonably high, public understanding tends to be limited (Riddell, 2007). For example, in South Korea, relatively low levels of knowledge co-exists with reasonably high levels of support for poverty reduction generally, and middling levels of support for their government's development cooperation programme (Kwon et al., 2012). In the Netherlands, decades of investing in development awareness has not resulted in a stronger base of support for the Dutch development cooperation policy.

Part of the challenge is the lack of understanding of why the general public holds certain views, and what could be done to influence these views – that is, what makes communication efforts "effective". In many countries, efforts have been made to track public opinion through surveys. Nevertheless, evidence from such surveys and polls is not sufficient to fully demonstrate attitudes and how they are formed.<sup>7</sup> If the assumption that communication leads to either increased understanding or support does not necessarily hold in all cases, this has implications for why and how countries may choose to approach communication of development cooperation to domestic audiences.

*7. For example, Henson et al. (2010) discuss some of the potential weaknesses of surveys, p17.*

Secondly, much of the literature on development communication focuses on developed countries. As such, it assumes certain political realities, and frames communication as being necessary because (assuming it is causally related with public support) public support is seen to be a precondition for a government to undertake effective development cooperation. The underlying belief is that governments should have public support in order to: a) critique international development policy and improve its effectiveness; and/or b) ensure political backing so that budgets can be passed through parliaments; and/or c) approve and legitimize the expenditure that governments would want to make anyway for e.g. diplomatic or economic purposes (Henson et al., 2013). However, there has been little analysis of what the general public thinks of their countries' development cooperation activities, and what their concerns are. As such, some of the above rationales for communication may not necessarily hold in all contexts. As a result, countries would need to understand why and how they undertake development communication in their own particular context.

A third assumption in much of the existing literature is that the general public across countries sees the world in the same way, and will therefore respond positively to similar prompts, such as "moral obligation", "responsibility as a global citizen", "justice", and "national interest". There are also assumptions about shared views of what causes poverty, what development looks like, how it should be achieved, and who is best placed to make that happen. However, these beliefs depend on broader attitudes and experiences (Henson et al., 2010). In some countries, solidarity among former victims of colonialism, and/or shared view that the global system as it exists is unjust, forms a strong bond and sense of obligation. The citizens of these countries may be less likely to respond positively to messages of moral duty, although these might appeal in other countries. In some countries, messages that call on their responsibility to help people in faraway places may not resonate. Other countries, such as South Korea, have a strong sense of gratitude for the assistance they have received in the past, and as such, messages of "giving back" appeal to the population. If beliefs about responsibility and obligation are as varied and changing as cultural norms in any given context, effective communication strategies need to accommodate these subtleties.



# China

## Snapshot

- *Existing domestic survey results show that less than half of the respondents have some kind of knowledge of China's development cooperation and an even smaller proportion show support for it. This may result from two factors: on one hand, foreign aid is still a new topic among the domestic public. And from the supply side, public information on China's foreign aid is scarce. On the other, from the demand side, poverty is still rather prevalent in this country. The public is still more concerned about domestic poverty issues than China's development work overseas.*
- *Currently, China does not have a well-established development cooperation communication strategy. But there has been increasing government-led development cooperation communication in recent years, such as the release of white papers, support for development education programmes and the creation of TV programmes. Awareness-raising activities such as public events, social media platforms and overseas volunteerism have also been on the rise.*
- *In terms of communication channels, most of the coverage on China's development cooperation is led by mainstream state-owned media, while online media and commercial media have also started to report on this topic since 2005. The increasing engagement of Chinese NGOs and participation of international organizations in delivering development cooperation provides an opportunity for China to broaden its communication channels.*

## Overview

China started providing material assistance in 1950 to Vietnam and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and expanded its foreign aid to other developing countries after the Bandung Conference in Indonesia in 1955. Since the Reform and Opening-up Policy in the late 1970s, China has become more active in the international arena and has gradually transitioned from a recipient to a provider of development assistance. At the same time, China's foreign aid has gradually moved away from being motivated by political ideology to become increasingly driven by economic pragmatism. Since the very beginning, China's foreign aid has adhered to the principles of non-interference, no strings attached, mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, same principles largely upheld by other SSC providers.

According to China's official data, by 2016, China had provided RMB 400 billion in foreign aid (about US\$58 billion) to a total of 166 countries and international organizations (SCIO, 2016). According to China's two White Papers on Foreign Aid (SCIO, 2011 and 2014), complete projects



and material assistance are the main aid modalities while technical cooperation and human resources development cooperation are on the rise. Asia and Africa are the main geographic focuses of China's aid. Agriculture, education, medical services, social services facilities, and humanitarian assistance are the priority sectors (SCIO, 2014). China's foreign aid is officially managed and coordinated by the Department of Foreign Assistance under the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), and implemented by different line ministries and bureaus depending on the sectoral focus of the project. The Export-Import Bank (Eximbank) of China issues and manages concessional loans.

## **Context**

Under the SSC principles of win-win cooperation and mutual benefit, China's development cooperation has greatly expanded in recent years, which has drawn growing media attention both domestically and internationally. With the growing financial commitments and development cooperation activities comes increasing demand from the international community for China to publicize more information and data on its foreign aid. There has been debate, especially in the international community, about the purposes, processes, scale and results of China's foreign aid.

Although no government-organized public opinion poll on attitudes towards Chinese foreign aid has been conducted, a small amount of research exists. For example, in 2012, the global research consultancy, InterMedia, reported that 46 per cent of the Chinese urban population indicated interest in development cooperation, but only 26 per cent of the interested citizens would like the Chinese government to do more. The report also pointed out that people surveyed in China might conclude domestic success such as poverty reduction, improved access to healthcare and education and the alike as evidence of China's development cooperation effectiveness (InterMedia, 2012). The misunderstanding of development cooperation could have skewed the survey results. In 2014, Cheng and Smyth found that Chinese people's participation in politics and religion increased their support for foreign aid, and people in poorer areas showed less support (Cheng and Smyth, 2015). In Chan and Quek's 2016 study, they found that only 18.6 per cent of the survey respondents supported China in spending more on foreign aid. They also found that public support for foreign aid did not depend on whether aid data is provided, as the number does not tell anything more than meets the eye (Chan and Quek, 2016). The same study also found that 78.8 per cent of all respondents believed that national reputation and honour from providing aid were more important than the wellbeing of the populations in recipient countries (Chan and Quek, 2016). Most recently, in 2016, Li and Xu conducted a survey of 3513 people over a diverse range of demographic characteristics across China and found that 43.2 per cent of them claimed knowledge of China's foreign aid and that this knowledge is positively correlated with the level of education (Li and Xu, 2016). The same survey also found that 50.7 per cent of the respondents of age 18-29 knew about China's aid while for age 60 or above, it was 36.5 per cent. Overall, 81.5 per cent of those respondents that claimed knowledge of China's aid

supported China's aid and respondents of higher income tended to show stronger support than those of lower income (Li and Xu, 2016).

In a nutshell, these research findings are consistent in showing that less than half of the survey respondents have some kind of knowledge of China's development cooperation and an even smaller proportion show support for it. This may result from two factors: on one hand, public information on China's foreign aid is scarce and the general public has limited knowledge of this field. On the other, as poverty is still rather prevalent in this country, the Chinese public is primarily concerned with domestic poverty issues, rather than supporting poverty reduction overseas.

## **Communication**

### *Development cooperation coverage dominated by state-owned media*

Currently, China does not have well-established development cooperation communication strategy. MOFCOM manages the publicity of China's foreign aid work. In the case of foreign aid-related information, MOFCOM provides concrete materials to the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China, and the latter determines how to publicize the information through state-owned media. Examples of important development cooperation information include: state visit announcements; outcomes from high-level events; and emergency humanitarian assistance. Currently, domestic media coverage of China's development cooperation is always subsumed into larger economic cooperation issues, such as trade and investment. Publicized information often tends to provide general information, rather than individual stories or the management cycle of aid projects. It also focuses more on the history and inputs of aid projects instead of the impacts on the ground. While such reporting is noticeable, it is hard to determine how much of it is driven by public interest.

Most of the coverage of China's development cooperation is led by mainstream state-owned media, such as the Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily and CCTV, while online media such as Netease, Sohu, and Phoenix Video, as well as commercial media, such as the Economic Observer and Yicai, have also started to report on this topic since 2005. While still rather limited, commercial media reporting could be considered primarily driven by public interest rather than government interest. However, stories and impacts of aid projects require in-depth field studies, which would often prove difficult under the existing human resource management system and budget system of media outlets: none of the media outlets interviewed has full-time journalists to report on China's foreign aid.<sup>8</sup>

8. Interviews with media professionals in Beijing, June 2016.

Through the South-South Cooperation Aid Fund announced at the 2015 UN Summit, for instance, China is seeking to increase the engagement of Chinese NGOs and international organizations as implementing partners of development cooperation projects. The increasing openness towards working with the international community and the civil society presents an opportunity for China to broaden its communication channels.

#### *Reasons for lack of development cooperation communication*

The lack of information-sharing and still limited scope of the information shared may be a result of factors of both the supply and demand side: the Chinese government does not release detailed information on projects and the general public has not become concerned about it.

From the demand side, as indicated earlier, in China, the level of knowledge of and support for development cooperation is relatively low. A search on Sina Weibo indicates that there are quite a few topics related to China's overseas engagement with a relatively large number of views. "Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)" and "Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)" are the two topics that have received considerably higher numbers of views compared to "international development" and "foreign aid".<sup>9</sup> This shows that there is currently less public attention paid to conceptual topics than to concrete topics and specific institutions.

On the supply side, the government is mainly concerned about the timing of the communication. For example, the announcement of the donation of school buses to Macedonia in 2011 after a serious domestic school bus accident killing 19 pre-school children failed to gain understanding among the Chinese public.<sup>10</sup> The timing was bad due to the fact that the general public was more concerned with domestic school bus quality than children in Macedonia. Another concern is political sensitivity. For instance, according to Chinese officials, releasing country-specific aid data might raise questions and cause competition between recipient countries who might come back to China for justifications. Therefore, the Chinese government prefers not to release detailed aid data, it was suggested that China "leave the decision on the publication of aid data to the recipient countries".<sup>11</sup>

#### *Increasing government-led development cooperation communication*

Although still limited, government communication about development cooperation has been increasing over the past years. It was suggested that China's growing engagement overseas

9. The number of views from first mention of topic up until 22 June 2016 for the BRI was 34,186,000, followed by AIIB 6,020,000; SSC 511,000; international development 322,000; and foreign aid 97,000.

10. Macedonia school bus web commentary piece available from: [http://bbs.tiexue.net/post2\\_5612377\\_1.html](http://bbs.tiexue.net/post2_5612377_1.html), accessed on 14 August 2016 (online commentary piece by an anonymous netizen).

11. Interviews in Beijing, June 2016.

has made development cooperation communication (to both the general public and overseas audiences) one priority for China's top leadership.<sup>12</sup>

The State Council Information Office (SCIO) has released two White Papers on China's Foreign Aid, published by the Xinhua News Agency. The White Papers cover the history, principles, scale, modalities, distribution, and management of China's foreign aid and international cooperation. However, the release of the White Papers does not seem to have incited much public discussion. Moreover, in 2014, MOFCOM released and started to pilot the "Measures for the Administration of Foreign Aid" (Measures),<sup>13</sup> China's first ministry-level regulations on foreign aid which set out specific rules for foreign aid project initiation, implementation, management and monitoring and evaluation. Before coming into effect in December 2014, the draft Measures were posted on MOFCOM's website with a call-for-comments period from April to May 2014 where citizens and organizations were encouraged to submit their feedback. Immediately following the release of the Measures, MOFCOM held a press conference where officials provided clarifications on these Measures and answered questions from the media.<sup>14</sup> With the growing domestic and international attention on the China-led initiatives such as the AIIB and BRI, the Chinese government increasingly sees the need to release more information to the public. Efforts have been made over the years, for example, at the 2015-2016 UN summits, 2015 FOCAC, COP21 and more recently, the 2017 Belt and Road Forum where Chinese leaders announced measures to support other developing countries' economic development and SDG implementation. It was suggested that China was obliged to release information on popular topics due to rapidly growing international attention.<sup>15</sup>

Although in China there is not a strong trend towards greater data disclosure on development cooperation, the concept of "*telling China stories well*" (讲好中国故事) has been emphasized by China's leadership at various occasions. In May 2015, to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the People's Daily Overseas Edition, President Xi Jinping gave instructions on international publicity work: "*tell China stories well*" that are receptive and popular among readers overseas". In February 2016, President Xi stressed again the importance of improving international communication capacities and "*telling China stories well*" at the Symposium on Party Media's Responsibility to Guide Public Opinion and during field visits to the People's Daily, Xinhua News Agency, and CCTV.<sup>16</sup> In fact, the government has already started to pilot initiatives. One example is the "Chinese in Africa"<sup>17</sup>

12. Interviews in Beijing, June 2016.

13. The Measures (in Chinese) can be found on MOFCOM's website, available from: <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/ae/slfw/201412/20141200824824.shtml>. UNDP China translated the Measures into English, available from: <http://www.cn.undp.org/content/china/en/home/library/south-south-cooperation/measures-for-the-administration-of-foreign-aid-.html>.

14. Details of the press conference are available from: <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/article/ae/slfw/201412/20141200824824.shtml> (in Chinese).

15. Interviews in Beijing, June 2016.

16. These are major state-led media.

17. "Chinese in Africa", 《中国人在非洲》, available from: <http://news.cntv.cn/2016/02/08/VIDEJ6RIL9MabxeEqmOUGNU9160208.shtml>.

documentary series released by CCTV during the Spring Festival in 2016 which in 6 episodes tells stories about Chinese individuals and companies in Africa. Phoenix TV also broadcasts a weekly documentary programme called “Dragon in the World”<sup>18</sup> which tells stories about overseas Chinese companies and individuals in the context of China’s “going out” and the BRI. To be sure, these communication products cater to both domestic and international audiences.

*Bridge the knowledge gap: development education and awareness-raising*

While the earliest development education programme started at the China Agricultural University at the end of 1990s, degree and training programmes on international development have recently emerged in top universities in China. For instance, the School of Public Policy and Management at Tsinghua University now offers Master’s programmes in international development. And the Institute of South-South Cooperation and Development has also been established at Peking University. However, in China, such education programmes tend to target students from other developing countries rather than Chinese students, while many Chinese working in the field of international development have been educated abroad. It seems that, for the time being, China prioritizes knowledge-sharing with other developing countries. Chinese researchers have been playing an important role in advocating from bottom-up for incorporating the international development discipline into school programmes, and the central government has been financially committed to supporting the establishment of these programmes.

Apart from formal education programmes, professors from universities and researchers from think tanks are often invited to talk and write about foreign aid to enhance the public’s understanding. Commercial media outlets such as Phoenix TV also invite experts to comment on international issues on TV. The China International Development Research Network (CIDRN) started operating in 2013 under the China Agricultural University. It hosts regular seminars open to the public, and supports researchers to conduct research work on international development. The China Center for International Knowledge on Development (CIKD), announced by President Xi at the 2015 UN Summit, has recently been established. As a think tank, it will seek to generate research on development issues and provide a platform for cooperation between the academia and policy community. Although still nascent, the CIKD could play a role in communicating to the broader public about China’s development cooperation.

Quite a few Weibo and WeChat platforms have also emerged to increase awareness of international development issues and stimulate discussions among the public, such as the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation,<sup>19</sup> the Center for International Development (Nankai

18. “Dragon in the World”, 《龙行天下》, available from: <http://v.ifeng.com/vlist/tv/lxtx/2016/0/1/detail.shtml>.

19. China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation Weibo account, [http://weibo.com/cfpa?refer\\_flag=1005055013](http://weibo.com/cfpa?refer_flag=1005055013), accessed on 19 September 2016.

University),<sup>20</sup> Brookings-Tsinghua Center for Public Policy,<sup>21</sup> Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies (Renmin University),<sup>22</sup> the Social Research Institute<sup>23</sup> and individual accounts such as the International Development Times,<sup>24</sup> Social Observer,<sup>25</sup> and InterDev China Consulting,<sup>26</sup> among others.

Furthermore, China's overseas volunteerism has significantly grown over the past decade. As one of the major forms of China's development cooperation, volunteerism has received increasing attention and recognition from the government and the society which have been promoting the mainstreaming of volunteerism in China. According to the 2014 White Paper on Foreign Aid, between 2010 and 2012, China sent about 7,000 young volunteers and volunteer teachers to over 60 countries (SCIO, 2014). China also plans to strengthen volunteerism in Africa, as part of the "China-Africa People-to-People Friendship Action Plan". Many volunteer programmes have been set up, including the Overseas Youth Volunteer Programme<sup>27</sup> and the Volunteer Chinese Teacher Programme.<sup>28</sup> These programmes are educational and play a role in enhancing Chinese volunteers and the wider public's understanding of poverty overseas and China's development cooperation, which also helps to create connections between China and other developing countries and empathy at the individual level.

Chinese government officials acknowledge that domestic communication about development cooperation is important and that more could be done in this area. A good sign is that "telling stories" about China's aid has been highly emphasized by both policy-makers and media outlets interviewed; they suggest that researchers could work with MOFCOM and propose ways for making changes.

20. WeChat ID: NKUCCID.

21. WeChat ID: brookingstsinghua.

22. WeChat ID: rdcy2013.

23. WeChat ID: SRI\_ADRC.

24. WeChat ID: idt2015.

25. WeChat ID: SocObs.

26. WeChat ID: InterDev\_Chinese.

27. The Overseas Youth Volunteer Programme was established in 2002 and is implemented by the China Young Volunteers Association (CYVA) and overseen by MOFCOM's Department of Foreign Assistance. Between 2002 and 2013, China sent 590 volunteers to 22 countries in Asia, African and Latin America.

28. The Volunteer Chinese Teacher Programme was established in 2004 and is run by the Chinese Language Council International under the Ministry of Education. Between 2004 and 2013, it sent over 18,000 volunteer language teachers to 101 countries in Asia, Europe, America, Africa and Oceania.

# Brazil

## Snapshot

- *Research suggests that the Brazilian public is largely unaware of Brazil's development cooperation but generally favourable towards helping the poor in other countries.*
- *Positive attitudes towards development cooperation are underpinned by: values of solidarity and moral obligation; national security; benefits of a stable external environment; and garnering support for Brazil's role in global governance. Economic interests are currently not considered a primary driver for Brazil's development cooperation.*
- *There is currently little government communication to the general public about Brazil's development cooperation and no institutional set-up for domestic communication. Development cooperation is considered an element of Brazilian foreign policy which is not readily open for public discussion.*
- *Brazil publishes the Brazilian Cooperation for International Development (Cobradi) report every several years, providing data on Brazil's development cooperation. The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) appears to be doing the most to communicate its technical cooperation among all agencies, while the focus remains on reporting.*

## Overview

Brazil began providing technical cooperation in the 1970s (Leite et al., 2014). Today, in Brazil, there are more than one hundred agencies involved in providing development cooperation, but a major one is the Brazilian Cooperation Agency ("ABC" in Portuguese<sup>29</sup>) which sits under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ("MRE" in Portuguese<sup>30</sup>). The ABC is not a central or umbrella organization that oversees the entirety of Brazil's development cooperation, rather, it is responsible for coordinating and financing technical cooperation. Other development cooperation modalities, such as peacekeeping, education and humanitarian aid, operate independently of ABC.

Brazil's development cooperation, as is the case for its foreign policy, is framed in the values of solidarity with other developing countries and principle of non-indifference, that is, Brazil cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of the people who request its intervention (Almeida, 2013). Brazil is committed to SSC, thus prefers not to be seen as too closely aligned with OECD-

29. In Portuguese: *Agencia Brasileira de Cooperacao.*

30. In Portuguese: *Ministério das Relações Exteriores.*



DAC practices,<sup>31</sup> although it has recently applied to join the OECD,<sup>32</sup> a move that may have implications for its development cooperation policy. Brazil is also a founding member of the BRICS New Development Bank.

## Context

Research suggests that many Brazilians are unaware of Brazil's development cooperation, or do not have accurate ideas about how much Brazil spends on development cooperation (Ipsos Public Affairs polling, 2015). There has been little government communication on this. And commercial media coverage tends to focus on humanitarian interventions such as the one in Haiti, and is often skeptical of Brazil's efforts,<sup>33</sup> by questioning the kind of governments Brazil is supporting, and the fact that money is being spent overseas while development challenges still exist at home, for example.<sup>34</sup> Despite this, the idea of being a partner in international development is generally seen favourably by many Brazilians. According to a national poll on Brazil's foreign policy, 92.5 per cent of the "interested and informed public" and 81.5 per cent of the "uninterested and non-informed public" considered helping the poor in other countries to be very important.<sup>35</sup> One poll's findings suggest that 22 per cent of the respondents think that the government should spend more than 20 per cent of the national budget on foreign aid.<sup>36</sup> While the general atmosphere is supportive, the main criticism of Brazil's development cooperation is related to its alleged support to undemocratic or corrupt political regimes.<sup>37</sup> However, the values of solidarity and moral obligation still seem to underpin the positive view. Moreover, national security, i.e. peace and security in the region and the benefits of a stable external environment, is of high priority for Brazil. Garnering support for Brazil's role in global governance reform is assumed to be one of the main diplomatic aims of development cooperation (Leite et al., 2014). On the other hand, economic interests are currently not considered a primary driver for Brazil's development cooperation. Public rhetoric rarely refers to economic benefits to Brazil as anything more than unintended consequences (Leite et al., 2014). This may change, however, given the current economic situation in Brazil.<sup>38</sup> The incumbent government is showing signs that it would like to balance the ideals of the Workers' Party government with ideas of mutual benefit and commercial gains in future SSC.

31. Interview with Brazilian NGO (1), June 2016; see also Kellee Usher (2011), 'Brazil: Aid from Below', *International Affairs Review*, Vol. XX, No. 1: Summer, p. 4; and Cobradi 2010 (Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) (2010), *Brazilian Cooperation for International Development 2010*, pp 14-25.

32. Reuters, "Update 1 – Brazil seek to join OECD despite political crisis", May 31, 2017. <http://www.reuters.com/article/brazil-oecd-idUSL1N1W1X2>.

33. Interview with Brazilian NGO (2), June 2016.

34. Interview with Brazilian contact, June 2016.

35. IRI (n.d.) *Brasil, as Américas e o Mundo: Opinião Pública E Política Externa*, São Paulo: Instituto de Relações Internacionais/USP.

36. These numbers should be read with caution – the same report found that 21 per cent of Brazilians surveyed thought the government already spent more than 30 per cent of the budget on aid, and another 13 per cent thought the government spent more than 21 per cent.

37. Interview with Brazilian NGO (2), June 2016.

38. Interview with Brazilian NGO (2), June 2016.



## Communication

Debate exists among the various development cooperation actors in Brazil as to whether and how development cooperation should be communicated.<sup>39</sup> There is a sense in the foreign policy community that development cooperation is part of Brazil's foreign policy, and as such there is some resistance to the idea that it should be opened up for public discussion. There seems to be little interest in discussing Brazil's development cooperation approach or activities based on the idea that transparency and public debate can enhance development cooperation effectiveness.

Currently, Brazil does not have a dedicated institutional structure for development cooperation communication to domestic audiences. The different modalities of development cooperation and the various agencies involved mean that it is the responsibility of individual organizations to communicate their respective development cooperation programmes to the general public. Of all the agencies, the ABC appears to be doing the most to communicate its technical cooperation, largely in the form of reporting rather than development education or public engagement. The ABC has an easily accessible website, which aims to publish information on all of its projects, including where the money is spent and why, although the information is not always up-to-date or available. Despite the ABC's website and database, it was ranked 56<sup>th</sup> out of 72 by the 2013 Aid Transparency Index, down from 49<sup>th</sup> in 2012. This ranking seems to reflect a lack of information on, for example, specific resources invested in projects and evaluation (Leite et al., 2014). The ABC also uses social media; it has a Facebook page with thousands of followers.<sup>40</sup> While a process to produce a White Paper has begun, to date, there has not been any clearly articulated policy document on development cooperation. In 2017, the ABC is planning to produce a detailed report on its efforts over the past decades to mark its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.<sup>41</sup> The Brazilian Ministry of Health is also noteworthy, as it has a publicly accessible management system for international cooperation in the health sector (UNDP China, 2014). However, monitoring and evaluation of development cooperation projects across all actors reflects broader challenges in public management in Brazil (Leite et al., 2014).

In 2010, the first report on Brazilian Cooperation for International Development ("Cobradi" in Portuguese<sup>42</sup>) was published, produced by the Institute of Applied Economic Research ("IPEA" in Portuguese<sup>43</sup>), providing development cooperation data between 2005 and 2009.<sup>44</sup> The 2010 report was the first time that data from projects across agencies had been collated and reported.

39. Interview with Brazilian NGO (1), June 2016; Leite et al. (2014) *op. cit.*, p 57.

40. ABC's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ABCgovBr/>.

41. Interview with Brazilian NGO (1), June 2016.

42. In Portuguese: *Cooperação Brasileira para o Desenvolvimento Internacional*.

43. In Portuguese: *Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada*.

44. Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA) (2010) *Orientações COBRADI. Cooperação Brasileira para o Desenvolvimento Internacional (Cobradi): Primeiro Levantamento (2005-2009). Guia de Orientações Básicas*. Brasília:IPEA.

While this represented a major step forward in reporting, the report only provides the total volume of Brazil's development cooperation without more detailed or disaggregated data. It also focuses on outputs rather than outcomes or impact of development cooperation projects. The IPEA produced a second Cobradi report in 2013, covering data of 2010, which includes a wider range of institutions and modalities, but still does not provide a complete picture of Brazilian development cooperation (Leite et al., 2014). In 2016, the third Cobradi report was published, covering 2011-2013.<sup>45</sup>

While the lack of detail could be a reflection of the difficulty in obtaining reliable data, it could also be the result of a strategic decision, because, as some argue, the Brazilian government is not ready or willing to place its foreign policy, of which development cooperation is considered a part, under public scrutiny.<sup>46</sup> The new government is said to be more focused on foreign policy than the Dilma Rousseff Administration, including South-South relations and development cooperation, and this culture could shift. Some experts argue that the new foreign minister's speeches tend to frame development cooperation policy in more pragmatic terms, as a means to enhance domestic economic development, rather than in the language of political solidarity. The fact that Brazil has applied to join the OECD may have some implications for its development cooperation policy as well as domestic communication practices.

45. Report available from: [http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=28542&Itemid=406](http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28542&Itemid=406).

46. Interview with Brazilian NGO (1), June 2016.

# India

## Snapshot

- *While it is suggested that most Indians would not know that India is a SSC provider, some would have some knowledge from the media. There has been little public debate about India's role as a development partner.*
- *It is suggested that the Indian public would generally think that providing development cooperation is a source of national pride. In addition, appeals to South-South solidarity and mutual commercial benefit are also effective in fostering public support for development cooperation.*
- *The Indian government currently does not actively communicate the country's development cooperation to the broader population. And development cooperation receives limited media attention.*
- *Lack of government communication to the broader public could be a result of: capacity constraints; question of who should communicate and what the message should look like; lack of incentive due to sensitivity to domestic criticisms; and lack of public demand.*
- *The Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) has engaged in awareness-raising campaigns through publishing knowledge products and hosting events related to India's SSC. The Forum on Indian Development Cooperation (FIDC) has also been organizing regional consultations with stakeholders at the grassroots level.*

## Overview

India has been undertaking development cooperation since the early 1950s when it began providing assistance to Bhutan and Nepal (Mawdsley, 2011). India's development cooperation has traditionally been framed in the language of South-South solidarity and non-alignment (Mawdsley, 2014). However, in the 1980s and 1990s, it took a more commercial and geopolitical orientation (Mawdsley, 2014). Today, India remains a strong force for development cooperation governance reform, articulating the need for a distinct Southern approach with a new system of rules (Chaturvedi and Mulakala, 2016) conceptualized by some as a "new development compact" (Chaturvedi, 2016). India's development cooperation is currently focused on its regional neighbours, particularly Afghanistan, Nepal and Bhutan, and some African countries since the 1960s. It has traditionally focused on technical cooperation, but there has been a significant increase in other modalities such as debt relief, grants, soft loans, and lines of credit (Mawdsley, 2011).

India has begun to centralize institutions for development cooperation. In 2012, the Development Partnership Administration (DPA) was created under the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), with the aim of managing overseas development projects, from concept to completion.<sup>47</sup> In January 2013, the Forum on Indian Development Cooperation (FIDC) was launched, with the goal of uniting India's various development cooperation actors, including the DPA, civil society and academia. The FIDC hosts events and undertakes assessments of specific projects (Chaturvedi et al., 2016). Another particular actor to note in India is the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), an independent think tank within the MEA that conducts policy research on development cooperation and international economic issues. RIS provides critical analyses of government policy that are available to the public and has an agenda-setting role, encouraging and supporting the Indian government to take new directions.

## Context

Some suggest that most Indians would not know that India is a SSC provider.<sup>48</sup> However, many Indian people would be aware that India provides humanitarian assistance, and would show support for countries such as Nepal, Bhutan, and some African countries (Mawdsley, 2011). Other research on public awareness suggests that Indians who regularly read local newspapers and watch TV programmes would have at least some ideas about India's development cooperation activities (Mawdsley, 2014).

Foreign policy has been a particular focus of the Modi Prime-Ministership. The narrative is one of being an important international actor, a responsible global power, and a leader among developing countries. This approach resonates well with the Indian public.<sup>49</sup> The belief that providing development cooperation is a source of national pride means that in India there is less of a sense that India should prioritize its domestic challenges first than exists in some other SSC providers. In addition, appeals to South-South solidarity and mutual commercial benefit are also effective in fostering public support for development cooperation (Mawdsley, 2011). While there are some criticisms, the most vocal and influential sections of the Indian society are likely to be supportive of state-led development cooperation programmes (Mawdsley, 2014).

The Indian public's support for development cooperation activities varies across different income/class groups and regional and ethno-linguistic identities (Mawdsley, 2011). According to some research, the wealthiest 20 per cent of the population, from the very wealthy to the lower-middle class, are likely to support development cooperation on the ground that it is presented as benefiting India's private sector. At the same time, research suggests that the language of solidarity and justice resonates with this group's self-image that India is a principled

47. More information available from: <http://www.mea.gov.in/development-partnership-administration.htm>, accessed 4 July 2016.

48. Interview with Indian academic, July 2016; interviews with a small sample of well-educated Indian residents of New Delhi with no connection to India's IDC during June 2016.

49. Interview with Indian academic, July 2016.

and important player in global politics (Mawdsley, 2011). The next 40 per cent of the population in terms of wealth are likely to support development cooperation for the same reasons as the wealthiest segment. The poorest 40 per cent of the population are also likely to view India's development cooperation positively as they would share the sense of pride in India's emerging power status, as well as feel solidarity and empathy with the poor in other countries (Mawdsley, 2011).

## Communication

While the Indian government is increasingly engaged in discussions about the country's development cooperation with the civil society, it currently does not actively communicate the country's development cooperation to the broader population; there is little public debate on India's role as a development partner (Mawdsley, 2014).

The MEA has a media centre which has several communications products, such as radio programmes on India's bilateral relations with various countries. However, these programmes do not particularly focus on development cooperation. The MEA publishes annual reports with a brief section outlining the main streams of India's development cooperation, such as lines of credit, grant assistance, capacity building and technical cooperation, among others.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to the MEA's communication efforts, RIS has engaged in awareness-raising campaigns through publishing knowledge products and hosting events related to India's SSC. For example, an international conference on SSC was held in March 2016 in New Delhi with more than 200 Indian and foreign participants, which enhanced India's role as a major SSC provider.<sup>51</sup> This event received media coverage in major Indian press such as *India Today*, *The New Indian Express* and *India Writes*. The MEA's partnership with RIS has facilitated an increased level of discussion about international development cooperation, but according to some, at this stage, this debate has not extended beyond the elite policy community.<sup>52</sup> However, others suggest that the FIDC has been organizing regional consultations with stakeholders at the grassroots level,<sup>53</sup> including local civil society organizations and the academia.<sup>54</sup> The rationale for supporting this increased discussion is seen to be largely based on the need to address concerns about transparency and accountability for the benefit of India's international reputation.

50. The 2015-2016 Annual Report can be found at:

[http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/26525\\_26525\\_External\\_Affairs\\_English\\_AR\\_2015-16\\_Final\\_compressed.pdf](http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/26525_26525_External_Affairs_English_AR_2015-16_Final_compressed.pdf). The Development Cooperation section is pp. 171-176.

51. In written correspondence with Indian think tank expert, January 2017.

52. Interview with Indian academic, July 2016.

53. Four such consultations have already been completed and several more are being planned.

54. Reports on FIDC regional consultations are available from the FIDC website: See FIDC Policy Briefs no. 5 and 6 at <http://fidc.ris.org.in/?cat=3>, and also the Chennai report available from <http://www.ris.org.in/fidc-regional-consultation-chennai-summary-proceedings>.

Mainstream newspapers such as *The Times of India* occasionally publish articles about India's foreign relations, in which, if raised, development cooperation is framed as part of India's important role on the world stage.<sup>55</sup> It is usually described in terms of being "generous" and "win-win", with a wide range of advantages to India, including "political, strategic and economic considerations, including maritime, energy and food security".<sup>56</sup> Development cooperation in India only tends to receive media attention when there is a significant disaster, a sizeable sum involved, or a high-level visit (Mawdsley, 2014). When it does make it into the news, coverage tends to be brief, factual, and subsumed within other stories (Mawdsley, 2014). According to an article in *The Hindu* in 2012, the creation of the DPA was almost entirely unremarked upon in Indian press (Chaturvedi, 2012).

As in many other countries, the lack of government communication about development cooperation to the general public seems to be a result of a combination of factors. Firstly, capacity constraints are likely to be one important reason. Neither the MEA nor DPA is well-resourced.<sup>57</sup> Secondly, there is the question of who should take the responsibility of communication and what the message should look like, as tensions exist between the foreign affairs and finance/economics ministries. This tension may also be related to the ongoing discussion about publishing a White Paper which has not yet eventuated.<sup>58</sup> Thirdly, the government is sensitive to domestic criticisms. As currently, there seems to be little appetite from the public for more information, little incentive exists for the government to provide more. In India, as in many other countries, development cooperation is considered by elites as a tool of foreign policy around which a rather insular culture exists (Mawdsley, 2014). However, despite the lack of information-sharing domestically, India is making more efforts to showcase its international cooperation efforts to international audiences (Mawdsley, 2014).

55. Interview with Indian academic, 22 July 2016.

56. More information available from: <http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/toi-edit-page/with-his-visit-to-four-countries-pm-modi-steps-up-the-pace-of-indias-africa-engagement/>, accessed 23 July 2016.

57. Interview with Indian academic, 22 July 2016.

58. Interview with Indian academic, 22 July 2016.

# The Netherlands

## Snapshot

- *Survey evidence suggests that the majority of the Dutch population support development cooperation but knowledge of global poverty challenges and solutions is quite weak.*
- *The Netherlands is one of the few countries that conceptually and structurally distinguish between development education and reporting.*
- *The National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development (NCDO) carries out broad global awareness-raising activities, including hosting a multimedia platform called OneWorld and an educational platform called SamSam. It also undertakes research through its research arm, Kaleidos, and runs public events.*
- *The NCDO classifies its audiences into several target groups and draws up a separate strategy for each group.*
- *In the Netherlands, a public opinion poll on attitudes towards international development is undertaken every four years as part of the election cycle. The Dutch government has been reviewing its approach to development communication and the new strategy will focus more on the “why” and “how” of Dutch development cooperation, rather than the “how much”.*

## Overview

The Netherlands has been a donor since 1949.<sup>59</sup> Over the past decade, the Dutch development policy has undergone considerable reforms: the number of partner countries has been reduced from 33 to 15, 10 of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Dutch overseas development cooperation expenditure, which since 1975 has either reached or surpassed the target of 0.7 per cent of GNI, dropped to 0.67 per cent in 2013, and looks set to further decrease.<sup>60</sup> The Dutch government is aligning development cooperation more strongly with foreign trade and has established a new cabinet-level post within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), combining

59. A useful overview of the history and evolution of Dutch aid can be found in the NCDO report by Spitz, Gabi, Roeland Muskens & Edith van Ewijk (2013), *The Dutch and Development Cooperation: Ahead of the crowd or trailing behind?* NCDO, Amsterdam, available at <https://www.evernote.com/shard/s2/res/ada15ee2-be97-4d93-ac0f-0b114c27baab>, pp 8-15.

60. The ODA share is estimated to have dropped to 0.67 per cent of GNI in 2013, which would leave Dutch ODA below the 0.7 per cent target for the first time since 1975. Indicative budgets for the coming years show a further reduction to 0.59 per cent of GNI in 2014, and 0.6 per cent in 2015 and 2016. Donor Tracker: <http://donortracker.org/donor-profiles/netherlands>, accessed 13 July 2016.



the portfolios of foreign trade and development cooperation.<sup>61</sup> Within the MFA, the Directorate General for International Cooperation (“DGIS” in Dutch<sup>62</sup>) is responsible for development cooperation policy and its coordination, implementation and funding.<sup>63</sup> The National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development (“NCDO” in Dutch<sup>64</sup>), a not-for-profit foundation with an independent governing board, shares responsibility for development education with several large non-governmental development organizations.<sup>65</sup> The priority areas of Dutch development cooperation include: women's rights; sexual and reproductive health and rights; water; food security; and security and rule of law.<sup>66</sup>

## Context

The Netherlands has historically been a small country of traders, and as such, the Dutch people are highly globally interconnected. In general, the Dutch public has a relatively external-oriented worldview. A public opinion poll on attitudes towards international development is undertaken every four years as part of the election cycle. The results show that the majority of the Dutch population support development cooperation: in 2012, 64 per cent of the survey respondents believed “helping poor countries to develop” is “important” or “very important” (Spitz et al., 2013). However, support for the Dutch development cooperation budget is lower, although this may reflect a tendency to overestimate how much of the Dutch budget is spent on development cooperation (Spitz et al., 2013).

Some research shows that despite relatively strong support for international development cooperation, knowledge of global poverty challenges and solutions is quite weak (North-South Centre, 2005). The same research also concludes that, in the past, high levels of transparency and public debate on aid has led to increased support for Dutch development cooperation (North-South Centre, 2005). This suggests that in the Netherlands at least, while information about global development issues is available, and is correlated with public support for aid, detailed information on the complexities of global development is not a prerequisite for support for government aid programmes.

61. Donor Tracker op. cit. Within the MFA, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is responsible for Dutch foreign policy and the Ministry's overall leadership. He or she is assisted by the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, who formulates and implements foreign aid and development cooperation policy.

62. In Dutch: Directoraat-generaal Internationale Samenwerking.

63. More information available from: <https://www.government.nl/ministries/ministry-of-foreign-affairs/contents/organisational-structure/directorates-general>, accessed 12 July 2016.

64. In Dutch: Nationale Commissie voor internationale samenwerking en Duurzame Ontwikkeling.

65. In this section the terms ‘development education’ and ‘global education’ are used interchangeably, based on the wording of the 2002 Maastricht Global Education Declaration which defines Global Education as “education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all”. It is “understood to encompass Development Education” among other aspects.

66. Donor Tracker op. cit.



Support for international development and for maintaining or increasing the Dutch aid budget has declined since a peak in the early 2000s when over 80 per cent of the population supported the maintenance or increase of official development assistance (ODA) levels (North-South Centre, 2005).

## **Communication**

The Netherlands has a strong tradition of communicating its development cooperation activities and policies to the Dutch public, and in particular, through development and global education. The 2005 Global Education Peer Review notes that the Netherlands was at the forefront of spending on both ODA and global education (North-South Centre, 2005).

The Dutch government established the National Committee for Development Education (“NCO” in Dutch<sup>67</sup>) in 1971 in response to the UN’s call for donor countries to increase public awareness of ODA. Europe’s first national structure for the support, promotion and funding of development education (North-South Centre, 2003), the NCO merged with the environmental education platform to become the NCDO in 1996. In the early 2000s, the NCDO was the largest and most well-funded structure of its kind in Europe, and became known as the “Centre of Excellence” in the field of global education (North-South Centre, 2003).

The Netherlands is one of the few countries which conceptually and structurally distinguish between development education/awareness-raising and reporting on development cooperation. The former is undertaken by the NCDO, which (funded by DGIS) within the MFA carries out broader global awareness-raising activities. The latter is covered by the Communication Section of the MFA which reports on development issues, focusing primarily on departmental policy and the activities of the Minister. The difference, however, is not reflected in the budget, where development education/awareness-raising and reporting are clustered together.

Holding most of the responsibility for development education in the Netherlands, the NCDO has several key activities, including hosting a multimedia platform called OneWorld which aims to promote global thinking and environmental sustainability, with 120,000 subscribers and 140,000 site visitors per month.<sup>68</sup> It also provides an educational platform called SamSam that raises awareness of global development, with magazines and a website for primary and secondary school children which has 550,000 subscribers.<sup>69</sup> The NCDO also undertakes research for the platforms and for external clients on global issues through its research arm, Kaleidos.<sup>70</sup> It is

67. In Dutch: Nationale Commissie voor Ontwikkelingsstrategie.

68. More information available from: <http://www.oneworld.nl/>.

69. More information available from: <http://www.samsam.net/>.

70. More information available from: <http://kaleidosresearch.nl/>.

suggested that government funding for SamSam and OneWorld is decreasing.<sup>71</sup> In addition, the NCDO also runs public events such as “Pillow Fight for Love”, with the aim of raising awareness of global sexual freedom,<sup>72</sup> and “Eat This”, to promote the understanding of global food security.<sup>73</sup>

The NCDO takes an innovative approach to reaching beyond the usual target groups for global education (North-South Centre, 2005). Its media-friendly activities play an important role in heightening the public profile of development cooperation issues (North-South Centre, 2005). Between 2011 and 2014, the NCDO received a grant of EUR9 million per year to promote global citizenship, with a particular focus on sustainable and inclusive development, and communicating the results of development cooperation. Its audiences include the civil society and the broader public, which it divides into several target groups, such as school children by age and by type of school, young professionals and immigrants, and it draws up a separate strategy for each of these groups.<sup>74</sup> Future communication strategies are likely to concentrate even more on disaggregating the population’s views and undertaking detailed analysis of the decline in support for aid among different groups. According to Dutch officials, this would then be used as the basis for a highly targeted communication strategy.<sup>75</sup>

The Ministry of Education also plays a role in development education. In the Netherlands, schools have considerable freedom over what and how they teach within general curriculum guidelines.<sup>76</sup> Values aligned with development education are encouraged at both primary and secondary levels, and teaching in the subjects of geography and history emphasizes a global outlook. Teachers can organize their own development education activities and events (North-South Centre, 2005).

Outside formal government structures, large non-governmental development organizations funded by the MFA also play an important role in global education, providing publications and educational resources for the Dutch public. They run campaigns and events, and create materials for teachers and students to use in schools (North-South Centre, 2005).

Government funding for development education is announced annually as part of the budget.<sup>77</sup> In addition, every four years, the NCDO puts out a policy paper on development education and awareness. After a consultation process involving public debate, the paper would be submitted

71. In written correspondence with Dutch government official, August 2016.

72. More information available from: <http://www.pillowfightforlove.nl/>.

73. More information available from: <https://www.eatthis.nu/>.

74. In written correspondence with Dutch government official, 15 July 2016.

75. In written correspondence with Dutch government official, 15 July 2016.

76. More information available from: <http://www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/netherlands-overview/netherlands-system-and-school-organization/>, accessed 13 July 2016.

77. In 2012, Dutch spending on ODA was cut from 0.8 per cent to 0.7 per cent of GNI. According to one source, ODA as a percentage of GNI declined from 0.82 per cent to 0.64 per cent between 2009 and 2014: <http://www.globalpartnership.org/about-us/donor/netherlands>, accessed 13 July 2016.

to parliament and endorsed as framework programme (Czaplinska, 2007). Over the past decade, the economic and political situation in the Netherlands has changed considerably, and funding for ODA has been dramatically cut. Assumptions that development education spending “should just happen” are being re-examined.<sup>78</sup> As part of these recent changes, since 2014, the NCDO has been receiving less funding and is therefore in the process of reorienting its position and its relationship with the MFA, and developing new business models.<sup>79</sup> The Dutch government has also been reviewing its approach to development communication strategy.<sup>80</sup> In 2012, the MFA’s Communications Department completed a communication strategy for 2012-2015, which is being regularly updated.<sup>81</sup> The department also monitors the implementation and results of the communication strategy, and provides an account of them in its annual report.<sup>82</sup>

The narrative underpinning the new strategy identifies working for global development as a public responsibility. The government is seen as more than just a financier, but having certain specific implementation roles such as selecting the policy focus, facilitation, setting the agenda, and exercising diplomacy. The new communication strategy will more strongly emphasize the “why” and “how” elements of Dutch aid, rather than “how much” it costs, in a way addressing the skeptics of ODA.<sup>83</sup> There will be more focus on how development cooperation is an investment in broader issues of international cooperation and globalization, such as economic development (aid and trade), migration (addressing the root causes), and peace and stability (for both the broader good as well as national interest).<sup>84</sup> The main target groups include the civil society, business community, knowledge institutions, and groups that are actively involved in policy development and implementation.<sup>85</sup>

78. *Interview with Dutch government official, July 2016.*

79. *In written correspondence with Dutch government official, August 2016.*

80. *In written correspondence with Dutch government official, 15 July 2016.*

81. *In written correspondence with Dutch government official, 15 July 2016.*

82. *In written correspondence with Dutch government official, 15 July 2016.*

83. *In written correspondence with Dutch government official, 15 July 2016.*

84. *In written correspondence with Dutch government official, 15 July 2016.*

85. *In written correspondence with Dutch government official, 15 July 2016.*

# South Africa

## Snapshot

- *The South African public is largely unaware of the country's development cooperation. Domestic development challenges are considered more pressing than challenges overseas, while the country's involvement in peacekeeping missions and humanitarian assistance is viewed more positively.*
- *"Ubuntu", the Southern African principle of human kindness, and a sense of sharing, togetherness and unity among Africans are understood by some as underpinning South Africans' support for development cooperation.*
- *There is no central unit responsible for domestic communication on development cooperation, and international development issues are rarely picked up by the media. But information about development cooperation expenditure is available in various agencies' annual reports, for transparency purposes.*
- *The lack of government communication could be a result of: lack of public demand; fragmented and inconsistent data supply; and a strong risk-averse culture among political elites.*
- *South African think tanks play a role in sharing the latest findings about South Africa's overseas development assistance with a still limited domestic audience.*

## Overview

South Africa has been providing development assistance since the late 1960s, primarily to other African nations (Besharati, 2013), originally to win political support. In 2001, the newly established African Renaissance and Cooperation Fund, situated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that South Africa's development cooperation would emphasize promoting democracy, humanitarian assistance, conflict prevention and resolution, and good governance.<sup>86</sup> Precise figures of South Africa's aid programme are difficult to ascertain given the multiple actors, complex institutional structure, and inconsistent reporting (Law Library of Congress, 2015). However, initial efforts to consolidate data suggest that South Africa is one of the largest development partners in Africa, both in absolute terms and in terms of share of GDP.<sup>87</sup> In addition to bilateral and trilateral aid, South Africa is also a member of the India, Brazil and South

86. More information available from: <http://www.dfa.gov.za/foreign/Multilateral/profiles/arfund.htm>, accessed 9 July 2016.

87. Interview with South African think tank (1), June 2016.

Africa (IBSA) Fund and the BRICS New Development Bank, and a prospective founding member of the AIIB.

## Context

This research suggests that the South African public is largely unaware of the country's international development cooperation.<sup>88</sup> Whether they would be supportive of development cooperation if they had more knowledge of it is difficult to determine. Some survey evidence shows that around two thirds of the population agree that the country should give aid.<sup>89</sup> On one hand, informal conversations suggest that where some awareness and interest among the population exists, there is a sense that providing development support to other countries, particularly those with undemocratic governments, is misplaced, given South Africa's own domestic circumstances.<sup>90</sup> South Africa has considerable challenges in overcoming poverty at home (Yanacopolos, 2011). With this in mind, "affirmative action" within its borders to rebalance huge wealth inequalities is seen as a pressing concern. On the other hand, involvement in peacekeeping missions and humanitarian assistance, particularly when directed towards reducing conflict and possibly impacting flows of refugees and migrants to South Africa, tends to be seen more positively. "Ubuntu", the Southern African principle of human kindness, and a sense of sharing, togetherness and unity among Africans are understood by some as underpinning South Africans' support for development cooperation. The more pragmatic concern of dispossessed poor people flowing over the borders into South Africa – helping neighbouring countries will ultimately help South Africa – also resonates.<sup>91</sup>

## Communication

The South African government does not have a central unit responsible for domestic communication on development cooperation; nor do most of the line agencies or other organizations that engage in development cooperation. However, because of broader standards around transparency, albeit disparate, a great deal of information about overseas development expenditure is available on the websites of the various actors in their annual reports.<sup>92</sup>

88. The terminology has shifted over time, from aid, to development assistance, to development cooperation (Besharati (2013) op. cit., p 35).

89. Interview with South African think tank (1), June 2016 referring to a survey conducted by Stellenbosch University, results and analysis of which are available in van der Westhuizen, Janice and Karen Smith (2015), 'Pragmatic internationalism: public opinion on South Africa's role in the world', *Journal Of Contemporary African Studies* Vol. 33, Iss. 3.

90. Interview with African academic based in South Africa, June 2016; also in conversation with several South Africans across June-July 2016.

91. Interview with South African think tank (1), June 2016.

92. A project to consolidate information on South African assistance given to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was led by Neissan Alessandro Besharati and Carmel Rawhani and ultimately took several researchers over 12 months to complete. *South Africa and the DRC: Evaluating a South-South Partnership for Peace, Governance and Development* is available at <http://www.saiia.org.za/occasional-papers/south-africa-and-the-drc-evaluating-a-south-south-partnership-for-peace-governance-and-development>, accessed 14 August 2016.

The lack of government communication appears to be a result of a combination of factors: lack of demand (low levels of awareness and interest among the public); difficulty in supply (fragmented and inconsistent data); and a strong risk-averse culture among political elites. Despite surveys suggesting that the South African population may well be largely supportive of the government's development cooperation, politicians are still extremely wary of resistance.<sup>93</sup> Generally, development cooperation is seen by political and policy elites as a tool for foreign policy and political and economic diplomacy, and there is concern that the majority of the South African population may question the legitimacy of sending money abroad. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) does communicate some information about its foreign policy through, for example, Radio Ubuntu, and its associated magazine. While these initiatives have not reached a broad section of the population at this stage, they can still be seen as an initial step to communicate with the public on foreign policy-related matters. If over time, the government becomes less cautious about communicating about external affairs, these initiatives could be extended to include international development.

While international development issues are occasionally debated in the parliament and mentioned in speeches at high-level events such as FOCAC, they are rarely picked up by the media. In South Africa, international issues of any sort are rarely reported, and little about development cooperation is mentioned in the domestic media. One cited explanation is that domestic issues are more than enough to sell newspapers.<sup>94</sup> Media coverage of South Africa's development cooperation that does exist is generally balanced, both praising South Africa's efforts and noting the potential for diplomatic benefits, while also asking questions about a more strategic approach and whether effectiveness could be improved.<sup>95</sup> Some coverage, however, is highly critical, focuses on corruption and fraud in development assistance.<sup>96</sup>

Outside formal government communication channels, South African think tanks have tried to fill the awareness gap through, for example, holding public events. While not part of a government strategy, these initiatives do share the latest findings about South Africa's development assistance, albeit with a limited domestic audience.

93. Interview with academic based in South Africa, June 2016.

94. Interview with African academic based in South Africa, June 2016.

95. See for example:

<http://mg.co.za/article/2013-11-29-00-sas-role-on-the-african-continent>; and <http://www.bdlive.co.za/national/2013/08/21/warnings-as-big-brother-sa-eyes-the-aid-business>.

96. See for example Mataboge (2013), "Top official Jerry Matijila rides out 'fraud' storm", *Mail and Guardian*, 04 10 2013, accessed 10 November 2016.

# South Korea

## Snapshot

- *Both public awareness of and support for Korea's foreign aid has grown since the mid-2000s, and there is a positive correlation between awareness and levels of support.*
- *Three messaging themes resonate with the Korean public: 1) global peace and stability; 2) moral responsibility; and 3) benefits for Korea. In addition, "giving back" to the global community, having received aid in the past, is also persuasive.*
- *The Korean government places a strong emphasis on communicating development cooperation to the general public as a means to build and maintain public support for its aid programme. The responsibility is divided between the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and Korean Eximbank (KEXIM).*
- *KOICA has two pillars under development education: the International Development Education Academy (IDEA) and the Global Village. It also creates TV programmes and utilizes its website to disclose information, mainly focusing on the positive changes that Korean aid brings to other developing countries. KEXIM tends to frame its message around the theme of the benefits of Korea's aid for Korea.*

## Overview

South Korea's transition from a recipient to a provider of development cooperation is relatively recent. South Korea joined the OECD-DAC in 2009 and at that time, pledged 0.25 per cent of its GNI to ODA, but has yet to achieve this target. In 2015, its ODA/GNI ratio was 0.13 per cent. The challenge of designing large-scale and high quality development projects is one reason cited for the under-spend.<sup>97</sup> The target has then been revised to 0.2 per cent by 2020. South Korea's aid is provided in two major forms: grant aid provided by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and concessional loans by the Korean Eximbank (KEXIM) under the Ministry of Strategy and Finance. The Prime Minister's Office plays a coordinating role.

## Context

In the mid-2000s, as Korea's overseas development spending began to grow noticeably, the Korean government was concerned about securing public support for increasing aid. The government conducted several surveys to better understand public opinions about aid

<sup>97</sup>. Interview with Korean academic, July 2016.



spending and national interest (Kwon and Sukyung, 2012). The assumption now in Korea is that increasing awareness among the domestic population can, if carefully designed, increase public support for development assistance. This is backed by survey results: there is a positive correlation in Korea between awareness and levels of support (Kwon et al., 2012). Surveys as well as other evidence suggest that both awareness of and support for Korea's foreign aid have grown since the mid-2000s. Growth in support has outstripped levels of awareness. According to some research, while only about half the Korean population in 2012 were aware of the government's overseas aid, around 90 per cent supported it. Both awareness and support have grown considerably over the last decade, from 37 per cent and around 70 per cent respectively (Kwon et al., 2012). Other findings suggest that young people in their 20s have the lowest level of awareness about Korea's foreign aid, and that people with higher levels of education tend to know more about it (Kwon et al., 2012). Support for overseas aid is higher among those who have personally visited developing countries (Kwon et al., 2012).

Three messaging themes, in particular, resonate with the Korean public. Firstly, being a responsible and mature global actor and behaving according to international values ranks high among Koreans as a motive for providing aid.<sup>98</sup> In a 2011 survey, 28.2 per cent of the survey respondents ranked "global peace and stability" as the primary reason for Korea to provide aid. Secondly, the notion of moral responsibility as a tradition is also powerful among Koreans. Many Koreans, including students, make personal donations to large international non-governmental development organizations, and there is a strong tradition of overseas volunteerism.<sup>99</sup> "Moral responsibility as a global citizen" ranks second (25.2 per cent) on the list of potential motives for supporting aid in the 2011 survey (Kwon et al., 2012). Thirdly, benefits for Korea are considered important; 20.1 per cent of the survey respondents believe that aid is important for Korea's economy and self-interest (Kwon et al., 2012). Additionally, the notion that Koreans are "giving back" to the international community, having been assisted in the past, is seen to be quite persuasive.<sup>100</sup> In the 2011 survey, that "Korea received aid in the past" was the fourth most popular motivation for supporting aid (Kwon et al., 2012). This theme has particular resonance with regard to providing aid to the countries that supported Korea during the Korean War, such as Ethiopia, Columbia, and the Philippines. These motivations vary by age and level of education. For example, those over 60 who have themselves experienced being an aid recipient tend to cite "giving back" as an important motivation, while those with higher levels of education note global moral responsibility as the most important (Kwon et al., 2012).

98. Interview with Korean academic, July 2016; Kwon et al. (2012) *op. cit.*, p. 68.

99. Interview with Korean academic, 14 July 2016. Survey evidence suggests that the amount of Koreans actively engaged in giving donations or volunteering is around 23 per cent (see Kwon et al. (2012) *op. cit.*, p. 65).

100. This message came across in several interviews with Korean academics, and INGO staff based in Seoul.



According to some research, while the majority of Koreans are supportive of aid, they are cautious about scaling up the volume, which is considered to be related to concerns over the economy (Kwon et al., 2012). Considerable debate still exists in Korea about the utility of spending money overseas, and some polling results suggest that around 20 per cent of the population feel that there should be no foreign aid spending at all (Ipsos Public Affairs polling, 2015). This caution may also be related to the misperception of how much Korea actually spends on foreign aid, as in many other countries as well (Ipsos Public Affairs polling, 2015).

## Communication

The Korean government places a great deal of emphasis on communicating foreign aid to the Korean public, as a means of building and maintaining support for its aid programme. Communication is divided between KOICA and KEXIM, both of which are actively working to spread the message of Korea's aid.<sup>101</sup>

KOICA, with its mission statement "Happiness for All, with Global KOICA", tends to focus its communication on the positive difference that Korean aid makes to poverty reduction.<sup>102</sup> Messages tend to be emotive rather than setting out details about how much money is being spent abroad,<sup>103</sup> although detailed information on expenditure is available in departmental annual reports and via the OECD.

KOICA has two pillars under development education: the International Development Education Academy (IDEA) and the Global Village, both established in 2010. IDEA was launched to "provide structured government-supported development education", following the models of Ireland's Development Education and Civil Society Department, and the Education and Partnership Team of the UK's DFID.<sup>104</sup> IDEA runs a number of activities, including regular courses for the general public on development cooperation and Korea's aid, development awareness programmes for college students as well as customized courses for corporations and organizations. It also provides short lectures for primary and high school students, training for primary and high school teachers, and an annual knowledge-sharing lecture for the general public.<sup>105</sup> The Global Village has been set up as an interactive destination where families and school groups, among others, can go and learn about global issues, and how Korea works to reduce poverty around the world.<sup>106</sup> According to their website, the Global Village has been developed along the lines

101. Some suggest that KOICA and KEXIM are competing to win public approval, hoping to be seen as the primary aid agency. Interview with Korean academic, July 2016.

102. Interview with Korean academic, July 2016.

103. Interview with Korean academic, July 2016.

104. More information available from: [http://www.koica.go.kr/webzine/201405/eng/sub1\\_2.php](http://www.koica.go.kr/webzine/201405/eng/sub1_2.php), accessed 14 July 2016.

105. More information available from: [http://www.koica.go.kr/webzine/201405/eng/sub1\\_2.php](http://www.koica.go.kr/webzine/201405/eng/sub1_2.php), accessed 14 July 2016.

106. More information available from: [http://www.koica.go.kr/webzine/201405/eng/sub1\\_3.php](http://www.koica.go.kr/webzine/201405/eng/sub1_3.php), accessed 14 July 2016.

of Ireland's Aid Volunteering and Information Centre, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency's Global Plaza. It hosts country-specific exhibitions which include a range of interactive and educational activities.<sup>107</sup>

KOICA also utilizes media for communication. For example, it created a TV programme called "KOICA's Dream" running from 2011 to 2014, aiming to "let more people know about KOICA's work and spirit", and encouraging Koreans to undertake overseas volunteering work.<sup>108</sup> For extra media appeal, the programme invited famous Korean entertainers who each year followed Korean volunteers to different countries. For example, in 2013, a team including "idols of the 90s" was sent to the Philippines; others went to Rwanda, Indonesia, and Bangladesh.<sup>109</sup> Programmes like this aim to demonstrate how taxpayers' money is being spent, and are generally very well received. In addition to communication efforts through the media, KOICA has an accessible website, with information on its policies and strategies, ethics, delivery channels, volumes, and organizational structure. It also has a dedicated Public Relations Office, and undertakes a range of awareness-raising activities.

KEXIM tends to frame its communication around the theme of what benefits Korea's aid can bring to Korea.<sup>110</sup> KEXIM has considerable information available online about its activities, in multiple languages. KEXIM's Economic Development Cooperation Fund was established in 1987 which uses Korea's own development experience to promote economic cooperation between Korea and other developing countries. It has employed two "ambassadors" to raise awareness of its work: at this time, baseball star Mr. Park Chan-Ho, and gymnast Mr. Young Hak-Seong.<sup>111</sup>

107. More information available from: [http://www.koica.go.kr/webzine/201405/eng/sub1\\_2.php](http://www.koica.go.kr/webzine/201405/eng/sub1_2.php), accessed 14 July 2016.

108. More information available from: [http://www.koica.go.kr/WEBZINE/2013-e\\_november/sub2.php](http://www.koica.go.kr/WEBZINE/2013-e_november/sub2.php), accessed 14 July 2016.

109. More information available from: [http://www.koica.go.kr/WEBZINE/2013-e\\_november/sub2.php](http://www.koica.go.kr/WEBZINE/2013-e_november/sub2.php), accessed 14 July 2016.

110. Interview with Korean academic, July 2016.

111. More information available from: <https://www.edcfkorea.go.kr/site/homepage/menu/viewMenu?menuid=005004001003002>, accessed 14 July 2016.

# Turkey

## Snapshot

- ▶ *In general, the Turkish public is neither aware of nor particularly interested in Turkey's development cooperation. However, there appears to be slowly growing interest among the public, possibly related to the well-publicized expenditure on Syrian refugees.*
- ▶ *Four main reasons underpin public support for development cooperation in Turkey: 1) international stature; 2) solidarity and protection of Muslim populations; 3) geopolitical influence; and 4) economic benefits for Turkey. Moral imperatives tend to be less important than ideological or material factors.*
- ▶ *The lack of government communication appears to be a result of: low levels of interest and awareness among the Turkish population; decentralized aid disbursement and data collection; and a lack of political will.*
- ▶ *Each year, the Turkish government publishes two reports, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) Annual Report and Turkey's Development Assistance Report, which include facts and statistics about Turkey's development projects.*

## Overview

Turkey has been a SSC provider since the mid-1980s but the volume was small (ToI, 2015). Since 2002, Turkey's aid has increased dramatically. In 2015, Turkey provided US\$3.3 billion in aid, accounting for 1.56 per cent of the country's national budget. Most goes to the Middle East (US\$2.6 billion in 2015, including assistance for Syrian refugees in Turkey<sup>112</sup>), followed by Africa (US\$413 million, particularly Somalia); South and Central Asia (US\$394 million, particularly Kyrgyzstan); and the Balkans and Eastern Europe (US\$207 million, particularly Albania).<sup>113</sup> 86.9 per cent of Turkish aid goes to projects in the social infrastructure and service sector, including education, administrative and civil infrastructure, health, water and sanitation. This is followed by economic infrastructure and services (10.1 per cent); the production sector (2.6 per cent); and multi-sector/cross-cutting (0.5 per cent).<sup>114</sup> So far, there has not been a policy document articulating Turkey's overall international development policy. Like many other development cooperation providers, Turkey's development cooperation is not managed through one central

112. As of 10 March 2016, the number of Syrian people in Turkey was 2,733, 784. These costs are included in Turkey's total aid. In written correspondence with TIKA government official, 9 November 2016.

113. In written correspondence with TIKA government official, 9 November 2016 and 12 November 2016.

114. In written correspondence with TIKA government official, 9 November 2016.

institution, but is spread across a number of agencies. The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) was created in 1992, currently responsible for about 10-12 per cent of Turkey's development assistance.<sup>115</sup> Its role is more of providing technical cooperation and coordination on the ground, rather than designing strategies.

## Context

Some suggest that, in general, the Turkish population are neither aware of nor particularly interested in the country's development assistance.<sup>116</sup> As in some other countries, many Turkish people overestimate how much Turkey spends on aid (Ipsos Public Affairs polling, 2015). Some Turkish experts believe that, as in other countries, many Turkish people would feel that there are other more pressing issues to be concerned about, and spending on overseas development is not high on the list of concerns at this time.<sup>117</sup> Others suggest that in Turkey, there is less of a sense that the money should be spent first on resolving domestic issues than there is in other countries.<sup>118</sup> Some argue that should more information be provided to the Turkish people, it would be well-received.<sup>119</sup> The slim research that exists suggests that much of the Turkish public feels that Turkey should provide development cooperation for four main reasons: international stature, as befits the former Ottoman-era power; solidarity and protection of Muslim populations that have been victimized and marginalized by the rest of the world (such as in Myanmar); geopolitical influence; and economic benefits for Turkey. Cultural and historical connections with other Turkic peoples in the region, and with what the government describes as a "shared cultural and historical background" also resonate.<sup>120</sup> Ipsos polling suggests that most Turkish people feel that moral imperatives are less important than ideological or material factors, but that these moral elements still play an important role in determining why people think Turkey should provide aid.<sup>121</sup> According to Ipsos research, 69 per cent of those surveyed felt that "foreign aid spending is beneficial to the domestic economy", and 71 per cent believe that "spending on foreign aid gives Turkey influence in the global community" (Tol, 2015). This aligns with the government's priorities of maintaining a strong economy and increasing its international influence (Lepeska, 2014).

While Turkish development cooperation seems to be generally accepted by the Turkish people at the moment, dissatisfaction could arise about how the money is spent, as there appears to be growing (albeit slowly) public interest in the topic, possibly related to the well-publicized

115. Interview with INGO official based in Istanbul, June 2016.

116. Interview with INGO official based in Istanbul, June 2016; interview with former Turkish government official, June 2016.

117. Interview with Turkish academic, June 2016; interview with former Turkish government official, June 2016.

118. Interview with Turkish academic, June 2016.

119. Interview with INGO official based in Istanbul, June 2016; interview with former Turkish government official, June 2016.

120. Interview with Turkish academic, June 2016; interview with former Turkish government official, June 2016.

121. Written comment from a Turkish academic who argues that actually moral imperatives are more important to the general public than economic factors.

expenditure on Syrian refugees.<sup>122</sup> And many Turkish people feel that Turkey's development cooperation should focus on effective and sustainable development rather than short-term, small and isolated projects (Tol, 2015). The high level of belief that foreign aid spending is good for the Turkish economy could mean that if the Turkish economy falters, support for development cooperation might also slip.

## Communication

Some suggest that while the current Turkish government is increasing the country's development cooperation expenditure, it does not prioritize communicating its policies and activities to the domestic population.<sup>123</sup> While some aspects of Turkey's assistance are mentioned in high-level speeches, these tend to be a small aspect of a broader message and focus on humanitarian assistance or cultural heritage protection. Syrian refugees in Turkey are also noted, often in the language of how Europe is failing to fulfil its role.<sup>124</sup> However, the media rarely pursues these snippets of information any further.<sup>125</sup>

Similar to other SSC providing countries, the lack of communication appears to be a result of a combination of factors, including low levels of interest and awareness among the population (although some evidence suggests that this is changing in Turkey<sup>126</sup>), decentralized aid disbursement and data collection, and a lack of political will. However, unlike some other SSC providers, it is suggested that the Turkish population may be supportive of the country's aid programme if given more information.

Despite the perception of low levels of communication, TIKA officials stress that communication to the domestic population is of very high importance to the Turkish government and note that the government puts a great deal of emphasis on communicating Turkey's overseas development assistance to the Turkish population via government reporting, television programmes, articles, news and social media.<sup>127</sup> Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs frames Turkey's participation in development cooperation for least developed countries in terms of "collective and shared responsibility", as a "moral and ethical imperative", and "critical for global peace and security".<sup>128</sup> Each year, the government publishes two reports, the TIKA Annual Report and Turkey's Development Assistance Report, which include statistics and facts about

122. Written comment from Turkish academic.

123. This was the view expressed in interviews with the INGO official, Turkish academic and former Turkish government official.

124. Interview with Turkish academic, June 2016.

125. Interview with former Turkish government official, June 2016.

126. Interview with former Turkish government official, June 2016.

127. In written correspondence with current TIKA official, July 2016 and 12 November 2016.

128. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (English website), *Turkey's Development Cooperation: General Characteristics and The Least Developed Countries (LDC) Aspect*, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-development-cooperation.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-development-cooperation.en.mfa), accessed 25 May 2016.

Turkey's international development projects. More up-to-date data is available from the OECD-DAC website, as Turkey reports its aid to the DAC with more regularity. In addition, TIKKA has an accessible website with information on its aid activities and also produces brochures about success stories.<sup>129</sup> The values TIKKA's communication draws on in its messaging include: the importance of helping people in need around the world; supporting people of shared background; and protecting historical places of shared importance in neighbouring countries.<sup>130</sup> In the most recent Development Assistance Report, the Deputy Prime Minister notes the importance of Turkey's development cooperation in helping Turkey "exert her regional power capacity and scale up her global influence" (TIKA, 2013).

129. Interview with INGO official based in Istanbul, June 2016.

130. In written correspondence with current Turkish government official, July 2016.

# United Kingdom

## Snapshot

- *In the UK, regular polling is conducted on public values and attitudes towards aid and development. Results show that the British public's awareness of poverty in developing countries is limited. Since around 2007, public support for the UK's development cooperation has been declining. Research suggests that the primary reason for public support for aid in the UK is moral. Historical ties and self-interest also play a role. The reason for not supporting aid is related to concerns about aid effectiveness and domestic issues.*
- *Currently, communication in the UK is primarily focused on reporting rather than broader development education. It explains the UK's aid in terms of both moral obligation and self-interest, as well as reassures citizens that the government is spending public money effectively.*
- *A number of communication tools are in use, including: reports and statistics; the Development Tracker; and the UK Aid Match scheme. The British government has also been creating opportunities for the media to cover development cooperation. The UK has taken a targeted approach to communication based on information about attitudes and opinions from research, targeting groups most relevant for the greatest "multiplying effect".*
- *DFID's Information and Civil Society Department within the Communications Division is responsible for both carrying out information and communication work, as well as promoting development education and awareness. Responsibility for providing small grants for development education is devolved to the national representative NGOs/civil society development education bodies.*

## Overview

The UK's DFID was established in 1997. Second only to the United States in terms of aid volume, the UK reached the ODA-to-GNI target of 0.7 per cent for the first time in 2013, despite economic austerity.<sup>131</sup> While the UK's aid budget has been increasing, the focus on efficiency has become stronger. Since 2010, the UK has closed its bilateral programmes in 16 countries, focusing only on 28 countries,<sup>132</sup> the top five being Pakistan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Syria.<sup>133</sup> Under

131. Funding for DFID was "ring-fenced" until 2015-2016, and the commitment to spending 0.7 per cent of GNI on ODA seems likely to be maintained for the time being at least.

132. More information available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development/about>, accessed 17 July 2016.

133. More information available from: <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/>, accessed 17 July 2016.

the new aid strategy announced in November 2015, motivations for providing aid are clearly articulated as being a moral obligation and supporting the UK's national interest. Development cooperation spending will be focusing on four strategic objectives: 1) strengthening global peace, security and governance; 2) strengthening resilience and response to crises; 3) promoting global prosperity; and 4) tackling extreme poverty and helping the world's most vulnerable.<sup>134</sup>

## Context

DFID conducts regular polling to better understand the British public's values and attitudes towards aid and development. Research suggests that, like many other OECD-DAC countries, the British public's awareness of poverty in developing countries is limited (OECD DAC, 2014). DFID's public attitude tracking surveys consistently show that 40 to 50 per cent of the surveyed population indicate they know relatively little about the lives of people in developing countries (Henson et al., 2010).

Survey results suggest that public support in the UK for more government activity to reduce poverty in developing countries has been declining since around 2007, likely connected to the 2007/08 economic crisis (Henson et al., 2010). In 2005, the EuroBarometer found that the UK had one of the highest levels of support for aid in Europe (EuroBarometer, 2005). In 2007, 50 per cent of respondents to a DFID survey supported increased government action, but by 2010 this had dropped to 35 per cent (TNS UK, 2010). As in most cases, knowledge of what the British public thinks of development cooperation is not conclusive; understanding of how attitudes are formed is even thinner (Henson et al., 2010). However, some research suggests that one of the primary reasons for support for aid is moral: a 2013 study found that the majority of the British population felt a moral imperative and responsibility to provide support to developing countries (Henson et al., 2010). Qualitative research by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) suggests that the British public believes that governments in industrialized countries are seen as having the primary responsibility to help the poor in developing countries for moral reasons and because of historical (largely colonial) ties. At the same time, self-interest also plays an important role (Henson et al., 2010).

The segment of the population that do not support aid tend to be sceptical about how effective it is in practice; they tend to believe that decades of efforts have brought little change, and have concerns about money flowing to corrupt governments in developing countries (Henson et al., 2010). As in other countries, many in the UK also believe that money spent overseas would be better spent on dealing with domestic poverty and unemployment (Henson et al., 2010).

134. More information available from: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/478834/ODA\\_strategy\\_final\\_web\\_0905.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478834/ODA_strategy_final_web_0905.pdf), accessed 17 July 2016.



Like in many other countries, the British public tends to overestimate the amount of aid that the government provides: a 2006 survey shows that the average estimate of the UK's aid budget was 18.5 per cent of total government spending, while in reality, it was about 1.0 per cent (Henson et al., 2010). Interestingly, the 2010 IDS research shows public demand for the government to better communicate its aid programme (Henson et al., 2010). However, given that much of the public support for aid is based on misperceptions about how much is spent, and where and how it is provided, it is possible that promoting greater knowledge could influence the level of support (Henson et al., 2010).

## Communication

The British government has traditionally been transparent in its aid reporting, via budget documents and annual reports. However, until 1997, there was virtually no official funding for broader development education, and efforts were mostly led by NGOs. In 1997, the government produced a white paper explicitly setting out the commitment to enhancing development awareness. Since then, several strategy papers and reviews have focused on how to best communicate to build support for the British aid programme. For example, the 1999 Strategy Paper "Building Support for Development" stresses how development education can change people's attitude and behaviour and enhance public support for aid. Although a good first step, the paper does not concretely explain how it aims to achieve these long-term objectives. Furthermore, sending a somewhat mixed signal, DFID announced a freeze on a number of development awareness projects in May 2010.<sup>135</sup> In 2011, a strategy was released which commits DFID to publishing detailed information about all its development cooperation programmes (OECD DAC, 2014). And DFID's 2013 Communications Capability Review sets communication as an institutional priority (OECD DAC, 2014).

Currently in the UK, communication about development cooperation is primarily focused on reporting British policies and programmes rather than broader development education. The British government believes that public engagement will build support if it directly addresses the public's concerns about development cooperation. Communication is used to explain the UK's aid in terms of both moral obligation and self-interest, as well as to reassure citizens that the government is spending public money effectively, as the goal of communication is "to demonstrate [...] that UK government support is saving lives and giving the world's poorest countries the chance to lift themselves out of extreme poverty for good; to improve the UK public's understanding that development creates a safer, more stable and more prosperous world for British people and British business; and to demonstrate that the UK government is investing effectively and efficiently to achieve results and progress" (OECD DAC, 2014).

135. More information available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/freeze-on-uk-based-awareness-projects>, accessed 17 July 2016.

To achieve its goal, the UK government has developed a number of public communication tools. For example, the Development Tracker is an accessible site which allows people to quickly see where the UK works, what they do, and what they have achieved.<sup>136</sup> Another initiative, the UK Aid Match scheme, aims “to give the public a say in how a portion of the international development budget is spent”. It does so by matching public donations to charity appeals for projects to reduce poverty in developing countries.<sup>137</sup> In addition, reports and statistics on the DFID website are available and easily accessible.<sup>138</sup>

In order to increase impact, the UK has taken a targeted approach to communication, based on information on attitudes and opinions coming from surveys and other research (OECD DAC, 2014). A 1999 DFID report notes the challenges of breaking away from speaking largely to groups already sympathetic to development, and reaching out to new audiences (DFID, 1999). DFID chose to target four main complementary groups in its initial communication work, namely, the formal education sector, the media, business and trade unions, and faith communities, given their important role in influencing public attitudes towards development issues (DFID, 1999). The strategy notes that the groups most relevant for the greatest “multiplying effect” can be identified through public opinion polling. Since then, a number of programmes and funds have been put in place, targeting these four groups (COI, 2011) and DFID has significantly increased its funding for operationalizing the communication strategy. By the end of 2010, total investment had reached £116.05 million (COI, 2011). In 2009, DFID undertook a series of reviews of the communication strategy, all of which point to some success in raising awareness and promoting involvement in development, while also noting that the degree of the success was difficult to ascertain as programme evaluation was found to be inadequate (COI, 2011).

Most of the British public’s knowledge about poverty in developing countries is derived from the media, in particular, television and newspapers. The UK government has for some time been creating opportunities for the media to cover the UK’s development work overseas. For example, in 1998, a government panel traveled around the UK to meet with participants from various sectors of the civil society to discuss current development issues. In the early 2000s, the Secretary of State traveled around the UK and held public forums. Both are considered to have provided good opportunities for the media to cover development issues (Czaplinska, 2007). Despite this, there is considerable skepticism among the population about the quality of media reporting (Henson et al., 2010). In the early 2000s, research suggests that the media

136. More information available from: <http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk>, accessed 17 July 2016.

137. More information available from: <https://www.gov.uk/international-development-funding/uk-aid-match>, accessed 17 July 2016.

138. More information available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development>, accessed 17 July 2016.

portrayed aid and development unrealistically, for example, concentrating on natural disasters and humanitarian crises. In order to promote more holistic coverage, the government has provided opportunities for journalists to develop their own understanding of poverty and development, including through field trips to developing countries (Czaplinska, 2007). Despite public frustration and skepticism about the lack of quality media coverage of UK's aid, there is little evidence that people make efforts to supplement media reporting with information from other sources, including DFID's website (Henson et al., 2010).

Unlike the Netherlands, the UK does not separate development education or awareness-raising from reporting on government policies and programmes. Structurally, DFID's Information and Civil Society Department resides within the Communications Division, and is responsible for both carrying out information and communication work, as well as promoting development education and awareness. While some developed countries draw the civil society and NGOs' involvement into the statutory or foundation funding and support structure for development education, in the UK, DFID directly supports development education through a number of schemes in line with its overall strategy. Responsibility for providing small grants for development education is devolved to the national representative NGOs/civil society development education bodies: in England, the Development Education Association, the umbrella body formed in 1993 to support and promote the work of all those engaged in raising awareness and understanding of global and development issues in the UK; in Northern Ireland, the Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies; in Scotland, the International Development Education Association of Scotland; and in Wales, Cyfanfwyd (North-South Centre, 2003).

As aforementioned, research suggests that despite efforts in communication, public support for development cooperation in the UK is declining. DFID, among others, recognizes that existing approaches have so far not been adequate to address the negative views about providing foreign aid (Henson et al., 2010). Research institutes such as the IDS have undertaken in-depth qualitative research to provide advice and recommendations for the UK to address this challenge. They include, for example, to utilize more involvement from aid partners/beneficiaries; treat the media as a development player; target different parts of the population with different communication approaches; involve the target groups in communication; and communicate honestly, rather than just provide good news stories (Henson et al., 2010).

## Conclusion and five-point recommendations

Against the backdrop of the emergence of a number of SSC providing countries as important development partners in recent years, the above analysis shows that while communication strategies of traditional development partners have been relatively well-developed, SSC providers' efforts have not been evident. Domestic development challenges in SSC providing countries have created a communication context that is quite different from that of traditional development partner countries. This study draws on the limited research available as well as primary evidence, such as interviews with government officials and experts, to paint a richer picture of the context within which both SSC providers and traditional development partners are making decisions about communicating development cooperation domestically.

Comparing the SSC providers and traditional development partners in this study, it is found that:

- In traditional development partner countries, the level of knowledge of poverty issues overseas and their government's development cooperation is generally low. In SSC providing countries, while poverty is no stranger to the population, the public's awareness of their government's development cooperation programmes generally remains limited. In addition, in many of the countries studied, the general public tends to overestimate their government's development cooperation budget (such as South Korea, Turkey, the Netherlands and the UK).
- While reasons for public support for aid vary across countries, some reoccurring themes among SSC providers include: solidarity; international influence/status; and in some cases, mutual (economic) benefit. These are in line with some of the common principles of SSC. For traditional development partners in this study, it is found that moral obligations tend to be the primary driver for providing aid, and to a lesser extent, self-interest. The population in both SSC providing and traditional development partner countries also share a few common concerns with their country's development cooperation, including domestic development challenges and the effectiveness of development cooperation (such as Brazil, South Africa and the UK).
- All of the traditional development partner countries in this study have relatively well-developed strategies, institutional structures and tools for domestic communication, and have research results available to support policy-making on development cooperation communication. SSC providing countries in this study, by contrast, currently do not have such infrastructure for communication policy-making.
- For traditional development partners, their development communication strategies generally comprise two elements, to varying degrees: 1) development education – to create the context and rationale for development spending, and 2) development

reporting – to account for the expenditure. Most SSC providers in this study currently focus their communication on reporting.

- Some common issues underpin SSC providers' current communication situation (such as Brazil, India and South Africa): low levels of public demand; sensitivity to domestic criticism; and issues related to data consistency and technical capacities. These countries also generally consider development cooperation as part of their foreign policy which is not readily open to public discussion/scrutiny.

This study thus suggests five key points that may be of use for governments to enhance domestic communication of development cooperation. While the research shows that public attitudes towards development cooperation are related to the level of knowledge of development, a broad range of other factors also come into play (Henson et al., 2010). The key message drawn from findings across countries is that **domestic communication about development cooperation needs to be context-specific if it is to be effective**. Based on the analysis of this study, the section below provides specific recommendations for governments that wish to engage more in domestic communication, especially China. These recommendations are by no means exhaustive, but it is hoped that they will stimulate further research and discussion.

### ***Point 1 Be clear about the goals***

At least internally, it is critical to be clear about the rationale for communication. Is it to generate debate so as to improve the effectiveness of development cooperation? Is it to shore up political will when budgets are tight? Is it to legitimize public expenditure that the government feels is strategically important to undertake? Or is it to increase public participation in providing solutions to global development challenges? The answers to these questions will by definition shape the approach to communication. In some cases, increasing communication could undermine support for development cooperation if the messages are not targeted accurately, and as a result, some countries have not prioritized development cooperation communication for the time being.

*What China could consider:*

Given China's fast economic development and increasing engagement overseas, there is growing appetite for China to respond to expectations from the rest of the world. However, despite high-speed growth over of the past decades, China is still facing a lot of domestic challenges such as inequalities, environmental degradation, an ageing population, and remaining poverty, as pointed out in the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020).<sup>139</sup> Therefore, while

139. The 13<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan is available in Chinese from: <http://www.sdpc.gov.cn/gzdt/201603/P020160318576353824805.pdf>.

it is important to communicate to the world to build the image of a responsible world power, balancing international expectations with domestic concerns and demand also matters. And a targeted communication strategy needs to take these factors into consideration.

### ***Point II Understand the audience***

Successful communication focuses on genuinely reaching an audience. To do so, communicators must know about the people they are speaking to. Thus the second point: develop a rich understanding of both public perceptions and attitudes, and how they have come to exist, utilizing both quantitative data gathering (such as surveys) and qualitative methods.

When it comes to support for development cooperation, attitudes and worldviews are influential. In the case of China, national pride is found to be a more important motivation for supporting aid than the wellbeing of the recipient populations (Chan and Quek, 2016). Despite the importance of attitudes, little research exists on how attitudes are formed. Public attitude surveys, as for example regularly undertaken by DFID and others, do provide a general indication of the trends in public attitudes towards development cooperation. However, their quantitative nature means they are not able to shed much light on what shapes these attitudes (Henson et al., 2010). It would be useful, therefore, to complement the quantitative data with more nuanced qualitative information about attitudes, and how they are formed. Approaches taken in social psychology, behavioural psychology, and anthropology could be useful in conducting such more in-depth analysis.

*What China could consider:*

There is the risk of more communication resulting in decreased public support. The best way to manage risks is to understand public opinions and attitudes. To do so, China could draw on the DFID's practice and start conducting regular polling on public opinions. MOFCOM could be the leading organization and commission such polling work to think tanks and universities. Such research could provide valuable first-hand information for the government to refer to when making communication strategies, and also lay the foundation for future work.

### ***Point III Support an external orientation within the population***

While limited research exists on the links between broader values and worldviews, and support for aid, existing evidence suggests that seeing oneself as a global citizen and perceptions of the world as "just" are associated with support for aid (Henson et al., 2010). To create positive attitudes towards a government's development cooperation policies and programmes, some sense of connection, obligation and responsibility to others beyond national borders is prerequisite, although this can take various forms. It may be a sense of moral responsibility deriving from a past colonial connection as in the case of the UK; or a feeling of connection with people of a shared ethnic heritage, such as Turkey. In some countries, a sense of

interconnectedness may exist due to a history of international trade, such as the Netherlands and the UK. Turkey has a long history of engagement from its part in the Ottoman Empire. For South Korea, the traditional bounds of obligation from the family have been extended outwards to include the wider world.<sup>140</sup> However, other countries such as China have only more recently become re-engaged internationally, and thus the population tend to be more focused on the domestic realm. Development education, in addition to reporting on government policies and programmes, may be useful in generating a broader understanding of the rationale for development cooperation among the population.

*What China could consider:*

Currently, international development remains a new concept for most Chinese people. Previous research shows that only a small percentage of the public know about China's foreign aid. This can be addressed by providing more information to the public on when, what, how and why China is active in this field. The implementation of the SDGs globally provides an opportunity for China to create the link between domestic and international poverty reduction efforts for the Chinese population. China could use SDG campaigns to sensitize Chinese citizens and share information on how China is supporting other countries' SDG implementation processes.

Similar to South Korea, China has its own overseas volunteer programme run by the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China and MOFCOM. The programme started in 2002 and has accumulated a considerable amount of materials for stories-telling about Chinese development cooperation. This could be an area for China to further tap into for communication purposes. For instance, one option is to make TV episodes to present Chinese volunteers' life abroad, similar to the "Chinese in Africa" and "Dragon in the World" series. KOICA uses celebrities for the "KOICA's Dream" programme to enhance its impact and increase followers, which China could also draw on.

Furthermore, China could enhance development education and create school curriculum for students so that they could develop a sense of global citizenship and responsibility. To this end, China could draw from KOICA's development education project IDEA which runs courses for the public, and the Global Village which showcases how South Korea helps the world to fight poverty.

#### ***Point IV Target the communication***

The fourth point is to develop a communication strategy that suits the national context. The content, mode of delivery, and institutional structure of communication need to be fashioned according to the audience. How institutional structures are shaped is important because

140. Interview with Korean academic, July 2016.



development education, awareness-raising, and reporting are at the intersection of a number of policy areas, including development, education, economic policy, as well as diplomacy and security (North-South Centre, 2005). This also includes building risk analysis and monitoring and evaluation into the design phase of the communication strategy. Underpinning all of this is the need to realistically map out the resources available to deliver the communication activities. A clear plan needs to be developed for what types of resources (including human resources, funding, and institutional support) and what quantities are necessary to most effectively reach the desired audiences and achieve the goals of the communication.

*What China could consider:*

Chinese officials suggest that communication about development cooperation could be enhanced by emphasizing 5 characteristics: morality ( 道义性 ), effectiveness ( 有效性 ), compliance ( 合规性 ), relevance ( 相关性 ), and diplomacy ( 外交性 ).<sup>141</sup> Firstly, the morality of providing aid needs to be clearly conveyed to the public. The connotation of foreign aid needs to reflect traditional Chinese philosophies that people value and can easily relate to. Secondly, the effectiveness of aid needs to be revealed in a way acceptable to the public. There are many success stories throughout the six decades of providing aid which could be communicated to the public. Thirdly, both the general public and international community have a genuine interest in accessing information about the compliance and decision-making process of China's aid projects. Fourthly, it is important to bear in mind the relevance of foreign aid to ordinary Chinese people's life. Lastly, foreign aid should serve as an important tool for China's diplomatic relations with other countries. In addition, the principle of win-win cooperation and the link between trade, investment and aid could be more explicitly conveyed to the Chinese public, i.e. the fact that China's foreign aid not only promotes development in other countries, but also brings benefits to its own population.

From the experience of other development partners, different audiences should be targeted differently. For example, the Netherlands has developed different communication products to target different age groups. In addition, targeted communication for the international community is also important. China can draw lessons from India, which has established the FIDC as a platform to convene development actors around the world and communicate about India's development cooperation.

141. Interviews in Beijing, June 2016.



### ***Point V Review and revise***

It is important to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the communication strategy according to certain criteria for success. Public attitudes and levels of support for development cooperation should be regularly reviewed using comparative surveys and qualitative research. The results could be used for updating policy and piloting projects. It is also advised to be flexible rather than wedded to a particular approach, and be prepared to adjust the strategy whenever needed.

*What China could consider:*

One lesson from OECD-DAC countries is to stay flexible and ready to change whatever is not working. It is important for China to test different communication approaches, and use evidence-based research results to support policy changes and pilot new initiatives while being prepared to change and adapt based on lessons learned along the way. In order to do so, there is need for establishing mechanisms and relevant criteria to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of communication approaches, and conduct regular research, in the form of qualitative and quantitative surveys, for example, to understand the changes in attitudes and opinions.

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## Annex I. China's major development cooperation pledges, 2015-2017

Occasion	Development cooperation pledges
<i>UN Sustainable Development Summit, 2015</i>	Set up the US\$2 billion (initial funding) South-South Cooperation Aid Fund
	Increase investment in least developed countries (LDCs) to US\$12 billion by 2030
	Exempt the debt of the outstanding intergovernmental interest-free loans due by the end of 2015 owed by relevant LDCs, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states (SIDS)
	Establish an international development knowledge center
<i>UN Sustainable Development Summit, 2015</i>	Undertake "Six 100" projects to support developing countries in the next five years, including: 100 poverty reduction projects; 100 agricultural cooperation projects; 100 trade promotion projects; 100 environmental protection and climate change projects; 100 hospitals and clinics; and 100 schools and vocational training centers
	Provide 120,000 opportunities and 150,000 scholarships to developing countries for training and tertiary education in China, and help train 500,000 professional technicians
	Establish the Institute of South-South Cooperation and Development
	Provide US\$2 million in cash to the World Health Organization
<i>Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, 2015</i>	Contribute US\$10 million to UN Women
	Conduct 100 health projects for women and children
	Conduct 100 "Happy Campus" projects to finance the schooling of poor girls
	Train 30,000 women from developing countries in China and provide another 100,000 skills training opportunities in local communities in other developing countries
<i>UN General Assembly Debate, 2015</i>	Establish a 10-year, US\$1 billion China-UN Peace and Development Fund
<i>President Xi's visit to the US, 2015</i>	Set up the RMB 20 billion (US\$3 billion) South-South Cooperation Climate Change Fund

<b>COP21, 2015</b>	Pilot 10 low-carbon industrial parks in other developing countries
	Conduct 100 mitigation and adaptation programmes in other developing countries
	Provide 1000 training opportunities to other developing countries on climate change
<b>UN General Assembly Debate, 2016</b>	Provide US\$300 million worth of humanitarian assistance to other countries and international organizations
	Raise annual contribution to UN development agencies by US\$100 million by 2020 from 2015 level
<b>Belt and Road Forum, 2017</b>	Increase of the Silk Road Fund by RMB 100 billion (US\$14.5 billion)
	Set up special lending schemes worth RMB 250 billion (US\$36.28 billion) from China Development Bank and RMB 130 billion (US\$18.87 billion) from China Exim Bank
	Provide RMB 60 billion (US\$8.71 billion) foreign aid to developing countries and international organizations participating in the Belt and Road Initiative
	Provide RMB 2 billion (US\$290 million) emergency food aid
	Increase of the South-South Cooperation Aid Fund (SSCAF) by US\$1 billion
	Contribute US\$1 billion to relevant international organizations
	Support the implementation of 100 happy home projects, 100 anti-poverty projects and 100 healthcare and rehabilitation projects
	Invite 2,500 young scientists to China, train 5,000 technical and management personnel and establish 50 joint labs
	Establish a number of centers, including: multilateral development financing cooperation center; research center for the Belt and Road Financial and Economic Development; Facilitation Center for Belt and Road Construction, IMF-China Capacity Building Center etc.