



Access to information, empowerment and 'voice' are at the heart of the BBC World Service Trust

The BBC World Service Trust is the BBC's international development charity. It aims to reduce poverty and promote human rights in developing countries through the innovative and creative use of the media.

How the BBC World Service Trust works

The charity works in partnership with local and national media to help foster dialogue and to provide greater access to information and services. TV and radio drama, 'soaps', discussion programmes and public service announcements are among the formats used. It also helps strengthen the media sector by training journalists and rebuilding radio and TV stations that have been destroyed or damaged through conflict. All of the BBC World Service Trust's work is underpinned by rigorous research to inform each stage of project delivery and to measure impact.

The work is based in over 43 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Former Soviet Union and Europe. Projects cluster around three primary themes: **Governance and Human Rights, Health and Emergency Response**. In addition, the Trust has two subsidiary themes: **Learning for Livelihoods** and the **Environment**.

The BBC World Service Trust is an independent charity funded by external grants and voluntary contributions, mainly from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the European Union (EU), UN agencies and charitable foundations. It receives a small amount of core support for its activities from the BBC (both in kind and cash).

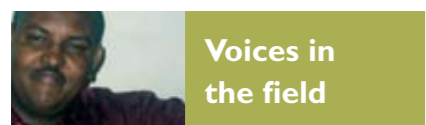
RESEARCH AND LEARNING GROUP

The Research & Learning Group (R&L) is an international group of research professionals from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the UK, who have been recruited and trained by the BBC World Service Trust to specialise in media and audience research.

To deliver innovative media solutions to development challenges, the R&L Group focuses on four key activities:

- ▶ providing audience and market insights to inform project development throughout the project cycle;
- ▶ conducting qualitative and quantitative research studies to assess impact;
- ▶ building capacity in audience research skills in country;
- ▶ documenting and disseminating what has been learned.

The R&L Group, established in 2005, draws on cutting-edge thinking from academic and commercial media research, and international development studies, and adheres to a strict set of ethical and professional standards. To date, the R&L Group has delivered research in 22 languages across 39 countries.



Voices in the field

Targeting hard-to-reach audiences in Somalia

Jamal Abdii Ismail, Research Executive, Somalia

"We have 144 listening groups scattered all over Somalia, and nine outreach workers. The distribution of the monitoring form is challenging, because we do not currently have postal services and there is no Internet in the places where the outreach workers are based. So how are we going to get them the forms in the first place? We do what we can, sending forms through public transport or through individuals we know who are going to those regions, and if people have phones we warn them 'somebody's coming with those forms; you should wait for him.' But getting to those villages can be a nightmare too as there is no reliable transport. Sometimes outreach workers go on foot, maybe for 20, 30 kilometres."

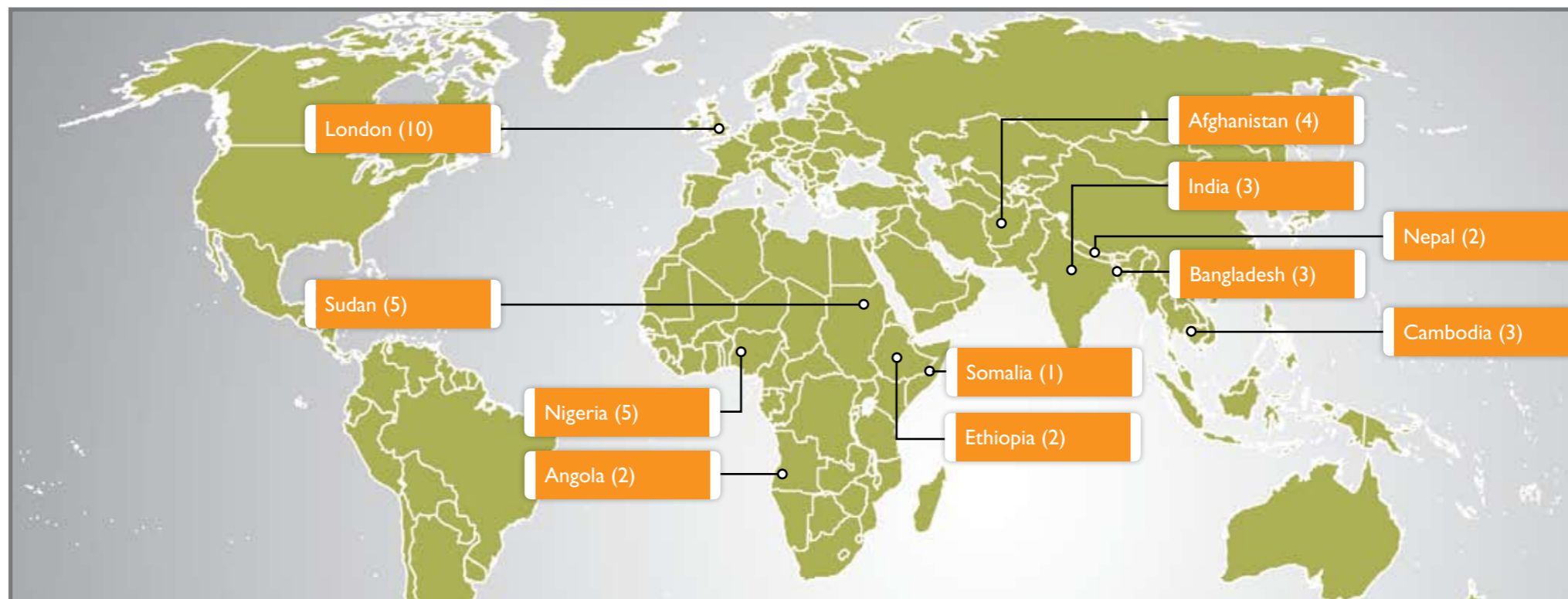
Project: 'Barnaamijka Xoolaha' ('The Livestock Programme').

Location: Somalia.

Project Objective: A weekly radio programme designed to contribute to poverty alleviation by empowering livestock producers, traders and those connected with the sector with the practical skills, technical knowledge and policy and business awareness to maximise their income.

Embedded Research: Audience research focuses on informing the project's development and determining its impact. In addition to formative research and pre-testing, baseline and endline surveys have been conducted to capture evidence of change in knowledge, attitudes and practices. Weekly monitoring of the programme's organised listening groups provides regular feedback.

Funded by: European Union's Rehabilitation Programme for Somalia.



Location and number of R&L Group staff at the BBC World Service Trust

"Today, our world runs on knowledge more than any other resource."

- Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General

Who we reach

The R&L Group is expert at conducting research with rural and hard-to-reach populations. Researchers have interviewed rural dwellers in Afghanistan, run focus groups with Internally Displaced Persons in Darfur, and found ways to access and interview men who have sex with men in Cambodia.

How we reach them

The BBC World Service Trust engages at four different levels: the **sector level** with policy and decision-makers; the **organisation level** with state, commercial and not-for-profit entities; the **practitioner level** with professionals and opinion leaders; and the **individual level** with various target audiences. While the levels are naturally interdependent, the 'Four levels of engagement' approach focuses interventions and their potential impact across all thematic areas. Certain projects are designed to target one of the levels specifically, while others are cross-cutting.

Types of research

Formative Research helps to establish the general parameters and content of a project. It is conducted during the project development phase. It can provide insight into the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, values, tastes, decision-making processes, information needs and media consumption patterns and preferences of a **target audience**. It can also provide insight into the **gaps and needs** of the media sector at all levels. Additionally, it can increase understanding of a particular development **issue, context** and/or **media landscape**.

Pre-testing occurs when media content has been produced, but not yet broadcast. Pre-testing helps to refine output in terms of tone, language, relevance and appropriateness. It can be used to test formats, scripts, characters, production quality, branding, message clarity and cultural suitability with the target audience(s). Pre-testing does not necessarily require finished outputs, but can make use of stimulus material such as storyboards.

Audience Feedback occurs during the project delivery phase, once an output is being broadcast. The purpose is to assess how audiences are engaging with and interpreting the output, after having seen, heard or used it in their usual media environments. Audience feedback reveals how outputs may be contributing to the adoption of desired knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.

Impact Evaluation is conducted to determine how much influence a project has had on those who have engaged with it. Impact research may be conducted at multiple points in time, but is particularly appropriate at the end of a project. It seeks to discover if there has been any association between exposure to outputs and changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. For activities designed to build professional capacity and media infrastructure, it aims to establish if the project has resulted in the desired changes in the media sector.

The R&L Group uses a diverse range of quantitative and qualitative methods, employing various forms of data collection (face-to-face, telephone, online), and making use of both primary and secondary data. Research methods include:

- ▶ **Surveys:** KAP - Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice; media markets; public opinion
- ▶ **In-Depth Interviews:** opinion leaders; stakeholders; target audience(s); peers and hard-to-reach populations
- ▶ **Focus groups**
- ▶ **Community-based 'rapid feedback'**
- ▶ **Panels**
- ▶ **Listening groups**
- ▶ **Facilitated workshops**
- ▶ **Skills assessment**
- ▶ **Pre/Post tests**
- ▶ **Content analysis**
- ▶ **Web metrics**
- ▶ **Social network analysis**
- ▶ **Policy analysis**
- ▶ **Desk research**
- ▶ **Observation**



Voices in the field

Conducting formative research in Nepal

Romi Gurung, Research Executive, Nepal

"In Nepal we are working on a peace-building project, and we're looking at two different concepts: social inclusion and political engagement. With our survey we are trying to understand various dimensions of knowledge, attitudes and practice regarding those two concepts. The study also helps us to understand media habits and preferences. It helps us to know what time of the day people like to listen to drama or discussion programmes. What are the stations they listen to? What are the days? In future qualitative research, we will be able to formulate questions based on our study to understand the 'whys'; why are people being socially excluded? Why are people not participating actively in political activities and why are people not talking about politics?"

Project: 'Sajha Sawal' ('Common Questions').

Location: Nepal.

Project Objective: 'Sajha Sawal' is a radio discussion programme launched in 2007 to support good governance and the peace process in Nepal. The programme seeks to create dialogue between those in power and communities that have traditionally been excluded, including rural communities and women. On the programme, Nepalese citizens question politicians and decision makers directly in front of a live audience.

Embedded Research: The formative research is designed to establish a baseline at the start of a project, against which the project's activities can be measured, and to inform and guide the content, format, broadcast time and overall feel of the output. The research will enable the creation of output that resonates with the target audience.

Funded by: UNDP's Decentralised Local Governance Support network.

Research Studies

The following are examples of recent research studies conducted by the R&L Group:

- ▶ Knowledge and attitude research about elections in Sierra Leone.
- ▶ Lifestyle and attitude research in Bangladesh: Insights on the perceptions of homeless people.
- ▶ Men who have sex with men: A formative study in Cambodia.
- ▶ Sexual and reproductive health KAP survey among 15-24 year-olds in Ethiopia.
- ▶ The Darfur Lifeline project: Gender-based violence research.
- ▶ The impact of the BBC World Service Trust's Afghan Women's Hour and Afghan Education Project: Results from a national survey in Afghanistan.
- ▶ Understanding audiences of the Iranian multi-platform media development project.
- ▶ Voices of Burma: National survey for media and development.

Collaboration

The R&L Group collaborates on a variety of activities with the following institutions, including research, internships and capacity building:

- ▶ Annenberg School for Communication, University of Southern California
- ▶ Bloomsbury Colleges Group
- ▶ Cambodia Centre for Health Promotion
- ▶ International Centre for Transitional Justice
- ▶ London School of Economics
- ▶ Office of Transitional Initiatives, USAID
- ▶ Open University
- ▶ Oxford Internet Institute
- ▶ Search for Common Ground
- ▶ Society for Family Health
- ▶ UNFPA
- ▶ University of Adelaide

"One really important insight for me was the way that the R&L Group links people doing individual research with the whole purpose and rationale for what the BBC World Service Trust is doing."

Nick Wadham Smith, Counterpoint, Think Tank of the British Council



The R&L Group at a knowledge sharing workshop

Capacity building

The R&L Group is committed to building the research capacity of its global team. By identifying individual and collective opportunities for training in qualitative and quantitative research methodology, the R&L Group has built up a network of skilled audience researchers around the world. All members of the R&L Group participate in face-to-face knowledge sharing workshops, as well as on-going distance learning and mentoring. Through these efforts, the BBC World Service Trust contributes to the capacity building of the research sectors in the countries in which it operates.

Dissemination

The R&L Group actively disseminates its research findings and methodological insights. A dissemination paper series highlights key research studies and the methods employed (download at www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/researchlearning).

Impact

We are committed to gathering evidence of the impact that Trust projects have made at all levels of the societies in which we work. This evidence includes audiences reached, knowledge acquired, attitudes changed, behaviours adopted, skills developed, networks and practices created, discussions fostered and social change catalysed in response to policies and other issues. The methods and analyses employed to gather this evidence is determined by the objectives of each individual project.

"It is amazing to see the R&L Group combining objectivity and rigour in research with a real passion for doing it well and tackling tough issues."

Gabe Della-Piana, Education evaluation expert, Washington D.C.

The R&L Group strives to maintain the highest standards of transparency and clarity in research methodology and impact reporting.

Call for new partners

The Research & Learning Group at the BBC World Service Trust is seeking new private and public partnerships with academic and research institutions, NGOs and donor organisations. If you are interested in developing a partnership with us please contact the R&L Group (details below).

Advisors panel

The advisors panel is made up of academics and researchers, at various institutions, who provide information and guidance on current research theory and practice to the R&L Group.

Dr. Sandra Ball-Rokeach
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University of Southern California

Dr. Bella Mody
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