

**A tracer study of the Communication Policy Research South (CPRsouth) community of participants  
from 2007 to 2015**

By

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

CPRsouth is a capacity building initiative to develop policy intellectuals in the ICT space from among junior to mid-level scholars and practitioners in Asia and Africa.

The main activity of the initiative is a conference held once a year preceded by tutorials on communication policy research to interested young researchers from academia, government, industry or non-government organizations. These young scholars (YS) are introduced to the theory and practice of taking research to policy. The young scholar tutorials are followed by the three-day conference where 20-30 papers are presented. Papers are selected in a double-blind review process. Young scholars participate in the conference.

A paper presenter (PP) typically spends three days at the conference venue and young scholars are hosted for all five days of the conference. Both young scholars (YS) and paper presenters are provided travel and accommodation. The cost of the conferences has been borne through grants from International Development Research Center of Canada and other funders, contributions from the host country and a nominal registration fee introduced in 2011.

The purpose of the present tracer study is to follow up on 400 plus individuals who participated in the past conferences of CPRsouth from 2007 to 2015<sup>1</sup> as young scholars or paper presenters, to see if the conference has lived up to its goal of producing individuals who are willing and able to influence communication policy in their countries.

## 2. HISTORY OF CPRSOUTH

CPRsouth has been existence since 2007 as an initiative serving the Asia Pacific region. An African counterpart was initiated in 2010. In 2012 the Asian and African conferences were brought together as one.

The first four CPRsouth conferences were Asia-based. First conference was held in Manila in January 2007 followed by the second one held in Chennai in December of the same year. The third and fourth conferences were held in Beijing and Negombo, in December of 2008 and 2009, respectively (Table 1.).

The first CPRafrica conference was held in Cape Town in 2010, followed by one in Nairobi in 2011. The parallel Asian conferences, then known simply as CPRsouth, were held in Xi'an and Bangkok, respectively.

From 2012-2015, the conference was held jointly in Port Louis, Mysore, Maropeng and Taipei, respectively. Before the merger, each conference accommodated a maximum of 20 papers for 40 slots in the two conferences put together.

After the merger, the number of papers was 30. Since the same number of researchers from Asia and Africa now have to compete for fewer slots in total, the increased competition was expected to increase the quality of the selected papers.

Table 1. CPRsouth conferences, 2007-2016

#	YEAR	CPRsouth (ASIA)	CPRsouth (AFRICA)	NOTES
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<sup>1</sup> Two conferences were held in 2007, one in January and another in December.

1	2007	Manila, Jan	-	Asia only
2	2007	Chennai, Dec	-	Asia only
3	2008	Beijing, Dec	-	Asia only
4	2009	Negombo, Dec	-	Asia only
5	2010	Xian, Dec	Cape town, Apr	Asia and Africa, separate conferences
6	2011	Bangkok, Dec	Nairobi, Apr	Asia and Africa, separate conferences
7	2012	Port Louis, Aug		Jointly with a quota of 15 papers for each
8	2013	Mysore, Aug		Jointly with a quota of 15 papers for each
9	2014	Maropeng, Aug		One entity, no quotas, Maximum of 30 papers
10	2015	Taipei, Aug		One entity, no quotas, Maximum of 30 papers
11	2016	Zanzibar, Sep		One entity, no quotas, Maximum of 30 papers

Since its inception, LIRNEasia, the administrative partner of CPRsouth, has periodically tracked the conference in terms of the objectives of the conference. The success of the conference was assessed by criteria including graduation of young scholars to paper presenters, acceptance rate of the papers presented, connectedness among the community of the scholars brought together and their success in the policy world. This is the first time that all participants were traced and evaluated.

### 3. METHOD

After collating records for the past conferences from 2007 January to September 2015 we were able to put together a list 501 participants in total. Since some of the participants have attended more than once, the net number of individuals who comprise the ‘CPRsouth Participants’ or ‘CPRsouth Community’ is 420.<sup>2</sup>

In November 2016, all 420 participants were contacted through email, Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn to inform them about the online survey. At the end of the data collection period, we were able to trace 233 participants or 55% of the community, with 127 responding directly to the online survey and 106 individuals traced using the information on their LinkedIn profiles. We were not able to get information for 187 participants because the information provided on LinkedIn was not sufficient or participants did not have a presence in LinkedIn.

Table 2. Response rate for the CPRsouth tracer study of November 2016

Traced	233 (55%)
Direct responses to the survey	127
Traced through LinkedIn	106
Unable to trace	187 (45%)
ALL	420 (100%)

For the purpose of this tracer study we define three categories of participants:

- PP only : Paper presenters only
- YS only: Participated as young scholars only
- YS&PP: Young scholars who presented papers at subsequent conferences (YS&PP)

<sup>2</sup> This number of could change slightly as we clean up records from past conferences.

Of the 420 in the survey population, we categorized the population as PP-only, YS-only or YS&PP using the following methods – 127 each using the information provided by them , 106 each using past conference records, but for the non-traceable participants it was sufficient to categorize them as a block of 187. The final distribution of PPs, YS and YS&PPs in the survey population was 202, 173 to 45, respectively.

For simplicity, we considered non-traceable participants as inactive in research, policy or taking research to policy. This gives a lower estimate of the productivity of the CPRsouth community, but the results are easier to interpret.

(Between December 1, 2016 when the data analysis started, and completion of analysis on December 05, 2016, six additional responses have been received on the online survey, but those data not included here. The online survey form will be kept open until December 30, 2016.)

#### 4. RESULTS

The YS&PP category showed better performance in almost all the survey questionnaire items including the traceability of the conference participants.

##### 4.1. YS&PPs were more traceable than YS-only or PP-only categories

As a group we were able to get information for 73% of the YS&PPs while the other two categories, were less traceable at 48% (PP only) and 59% (YS only).

Table 3. Traceability by type of surveyed population

	Survey Population	Percent traced
PP-Only	202	48%
YS-Only	173	59%
YS&PP	45	73%
ALL TYPES	420	55%

##### 4.2. YS&PPs also show the highest direct response rate

For the YS&PP group, we got a response rate of 62% to the online survey while the PP-only group showed a very low response rate at 22%. The response rate of the YS-only group was 31%.

Table 4. Traceability by mode of tracing

	Direct through response to survey	Indirect through LinkedIn	Percent traced
PP Only	22%	26%	48%
YS Only	31%	28%	59%
YS&PP	62%	11%	73%
ALL TYPES	30%	25%	55%

The response rates is perhaps a reflection of the higher sense of community and/or responsibility felt by the YS&PP group due to the extended time that they were present at CPRsouth events (five days as young scholars at the outset and 3 days as paper presenters at a subsequent conference.)

##### 4.3. Fifty five percent of participants report some activity, but YS&PPs were more active

Of the 420 members of the community from whom we have information, 48% reported some activity (research outputs<sup>3</sup> or policy outputs<sup>4</sup>). The highest level of activity was reported by YS&PPs (71%).

Table 5. Level of activity by type of CPRsouth participant

	Some	None	#TOTAL
PP Only	40%	60%	210
YS Only	52%	48%	165
YS&PP	71%	29%	45
All	42%	52%	420

When we look in detail at the type of activity (e.g., whether research outputs only, policy outputs only or research outputs and policy outputs), 53% of YS&PPs said they produced both research and policy outputs.

Table 6. Type of activity by type of CPRsouth participant

	Research Only	Policy Only	Res & Policy	None	#TOTAL
PP Only	5%	3%	31%	60%	210
YS Only	7%	6%	39%	48%	165
YS&PP	13%	4%	53%	29%	45
All	7%	4%	37%	52%	420

The objective of CPRsouth is not just about doing policy research but converting the research to ‘policy outputs’ such as --Policy papers/Briefs, Policy submissions/Presentations; Op-Ed pieces in the media; Interviews to the media, Blogs. The higher level of research and policy outputs by the YS&PP group indicates the importance of this group for furthering CPRsouth objectives.

Of the type of policy outputs policy briefs, policy presentations and project implementation topped the list with blogs, interviews and op-eds being less prevalent.

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<sup>3</sup> QUESITON 4: RESEARCH OUTPUTS: Since your first participation in the conference, have you completed, by yourself or in collaboration, any of the following research outputs on topics within the scope\* of CPRsouth? (Please check all that apply)

\*The scope of the conference includes any endeavours to facilitate the use of information, knowledge or information communication technologies to improve the lives of people in the global South.

<sup>4</sup> QUESITON 5: POLICY OUTPUTS: Since your first participation in the conference, have you used or provided, by yourself or in collaboration, any of the following policy outputs to support decision making on topics within the scope of CPRsouth, in your organization or in the wider policy arena? (Please check all that apply)

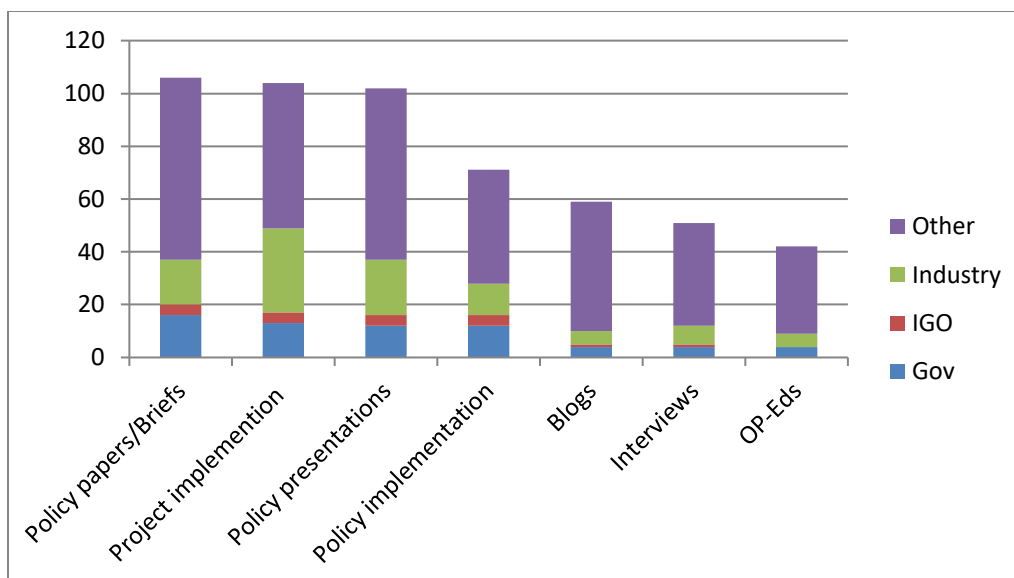


Figure 1. Type and number of policy outputs reported by the CPRsouth community, 2007-2015

#### 4.4. Within organization policy changes need more attention

Policy decisions relevant to communication are made not only by government but by telecom service providers and others. Therefore, we framed the question on policy outputs to include policy research that support decision making within the organization, because about 25% of community members worked in private industry which included telecom service providers and another 10% in government.

We expected those who work in government or industry to mostly do policy analysis for decision making within their organization and those who work in non-profit non-governmental organizations to address policy questions as outsiders. We were surprised by the responses.

Table 7. CPRsouth participants by sector of employment and mode of policy influence

	Within	Within/ Without	Without	None/No Response <sup>5</sup>	ALL
Government	20%	23%	5%	52%	53
Industry	10%	24%	4%	62%	105
Other	12%	22%	11%	56%	255
ALL	13%	22%	8%	57%	420

Of those in the government and industry sectors, respectively, (20% +23%) and (10% +24%) reported policy outputs aimed at decision making both within and outside of their organization. ‘Others’ category also said (12% +22%) of their policy outputs were aimed at decision making both within and without of their organization. ‘Other’ category reported a higher percent of policy analysis at exclusively outside of their organizations. Some of these results could be due to a misunderstanding

<sup>5</sup> We estimated the distribution of non-traceable members in Government/Industry/Other categories to be the same as those traced.

of the question. Whatever be the difference in reporting across sectors, overall, the results point to the importance of CPRsouth participants learning about policy influence within their own organizations.

Past tutorials at CPRsouth have focused largely on policy influence from outside. Of the 237 traced, 14% worked in government, 25% in industry and 61% in universities, thinktanks and advocacy groups and other non-governmental organizations. For those in government or industry influencing communication policies within their organizations would be important.

Table 8. Respondents by employment sector

Government	34	14%
Industry	59	25%
Other	144	61%
ALL	237	100%

In the future, the policy analysis needs of each sector must be understood before designing the tutorials.

#### 4.5. Successful policy interventions

While noting that changing policy is a difficult endeavor, we asked survey respondents whether they have had any success in bringing about changes, however small, as a result of their research and dissemination. Overall, 8% of respondents said yes and another 8% chose the optimistic response of 'Not yet,' These percentages are low estimates because we included 187 non-traceable CPRsouth participants in the 'No/not Applicable/Not sure category.

Table 9. success at policy change by type of CPRsouth participant

	Yes	Not yet	No/Not app/Not sure	ALL
PP-Only	5%	6%	89%	210
YS-Only	8%	9%	82%	165
YS&PP	20%	11%	69%	45
All	8%	8%	84%	420

Interestingly here too YS&PP category outperform others with 20% of them reporting policy changes and 11% reporting 'Not yet'.

Table 10. Examples of policy changes given by the 8% or 33 of the respondents are given below.

	Policy issue	Policy Change
1	Multiple policy issues addressed	Wide range of gov gazettes on Wholesale prices, market definitions, dominance, take over approvals of telecommunication
2	Telecom tax	Telecom tax reduction
3	Telecommunication Act	Amendments
4	Research collaboration policy issue	Research collaboration will resolve some issue
5	National broadband plan	Drafted National Broadband Plan for Ministry of Communications in SA
6	Multiple policy issues addressed	Yes
7	Net Neutrality Regulation	Free Basics Net Neutrality Regulation

8	Film and Publication Board on Internet regulation	Some improvements in policy
9	Spectrum award process	Our paper was used as a evidence in favor of Spectrum Auction, technology neutrality and band neutrality in designing policy in the competition authority of India
10	Access to and use of ICTs amongst women	Evidence influenced development of National ICT Policy. Design and implementation of gender-oriented projects to increase ICT access and use among women and girls.
11	Urban and Transportation policy	Articulating commuting patterns/ congestion + identifying areas with high regional connectivity
12	Internet privacy in higher education	The university administration engaged in discussions on protecting users' data in our campus and is in the process of upgrading its privacy policy.
13	Accountability in service delivery	Accountability strengthened and performance metrics drawn
14	FDI in retail	Government allowed FDI in retail
15	Broadband Access	Opening up public backbone network to provide affordable last mile solution
16	Open Government Data	I'm part of Open Data Barometer (ODB) research team. ODB is a global standard used by countries around the world to measure the progress of their open data implementation. Our work in Indonesia has led to issuance of open data regulation by several provincial and city governments
17	'Digital Monitoring System' (Ministry of Agriculture )	Govt. is planning to engage ICT based monitoring with 14000 users to support millions of farmers so that quality service is ensured.
18	Network Migration Road; Broadband Policy	Broadband Policy Approved, IPv6 migration roadmap under approval process
19	Road Map for Digital Sri Lanka	Digital government / open data rights issues
20	Cyber Law	New Cyber Law will be in place
21	Communication tax	No CommTax
22	ICT and Climate Change	included in review ICT for Development Policy for Ghana
23	Using Demand based data Universal access fund programs	Using a demand based data for needs assessment to develop project solutions under GIFEC's Universal Access Fund programs
24	Fixed broadband quality of service	The regulator issued a memorandum circular on the measurement and publication of fixed broadband quality of service
25	Internet Governance forum	Establishment of the internet governance forum in Japan
26	Many over the years -!	Government policy - land acquisition in India to telecom policy/internet access, internet and higher education, less regulation in higher education, financial inclusiveness, etc! Having said that, these are issues on which I wrote in my various columns, and policy-making in a country like India always remains a messy exercise. None can truly claim credits for any policy -- so to speak!
27	Developing the National Cloud Strategy	-
28	Interconnection policy	I am not saying it is because of me, they are MANY processes in between but I have chance to voice my opinion in front of the minister and I convinced him that the issue of MTR in Indonesia is so yesteryears. Telco should position as enabler thus lowering MTR is a win-win solution in the long run.
29	Bandwidth price	Reduction in Bandwidth price
30	Multiple policy issues addressed	-
31	Internet access	Contribution to the improvement of services related to the internet
32	Investment Policy for the Bank	Business cooperation between banks
33	Open data policy for higher education	Not yet

#### 4.6. Intention to continue in communication policy research

Asked if they plan to (or are able to) engage in communication policy issues in the future, 25% of all participants said yes, but of the YS&PP sub category, 56% said yes.



Table 11. Future plans of CPRsouth participants by type of participant

	Yes	May be	No/no response	ALL
PP-Only	17%	4%	80%	210
YS-Only	28%	4%	68%	165
YS&PP	56%	7%	38%	45
ALL	25%	4%	70%	420

#### 4.7. Most useful aspects of CPRsouth

Asked to name 3 items from a listed set of learning experiences at the CPRsouth tutorials or conferences that the participants found most useful, the top three categories were --How the policy process works, Writing a policy brief and Being part of an international community.

Table 12. Rating of CPRsouth learning experiences by survey respondents

How the policy process works	59
Writing a policy brief	49
Being part of an international community	46
Cross-country comparisons and benchmarking	44
Doing qualitative research	37
Doing a literature review	33
Policy processes in different countries	33
Using demand side data	25
Using supply side data	25
Using legal documents or other documentary information	12
Grand Total	363

#### 4.8. Suggestions for improvements

Sixty eight respondents gave suggestions for improvement or commented on the conference. We organized the comments according to (a) Young scholars/tutorial related and (b) Conference related and (c) Post-conference related and (d) General. Within the Conference category, we further divided the comments into --Review process and Content/Session.

##### a) YOUNG SCHOLARS/TUTORIALS

1. Widen scope of tutorials to include not just the young scholars but even the older guys.
2. Tackling a relationship life policy situation in the tutorials
3. More hands-on work
4. Make your scholars presentation more interactive. Ask Young Scholars to present during the sessions and facilitate their presentations and discussions
5. Group assignments after every session
6. Feedback we (RIA) have received is more interactive and role playing.
7. Doing practical sessions like writing a small policy brief/paper.
8. Demonstrating some case studies of successful research
9. I will recommend that the Young Scholars should be grouped around the specific areas they need capacity building ; then organizers should focus on that with hands on exercise in order to achieve measurable impact at the conference and follow-on activities post conference.
10. I joined CPR south young scholars 2011 in Bangkok and particularly enjoyed the session on writing a policy brief. It was a really great experience. My suggestion is that the topic of the

session should focus on the recent high-interest topic in ICT policy, where world renowned experts from this topic can be invited to give lecture

11. More exposure and knowledge sharing
12. I have a suggestion that please include one extra session of past young scholars to participate as paper presenters in next/coming session. So they can share their CPRsouth YS learning experience as paper presenter e.g. 2015 YS encourage to present paper in next 2016 CPRsouth conference.
13. I had a very positive experience with CPRSouth in 2008. The topics were very informative. I appreciated that there was an opportunity to meet and get to know other researchers from different places. I hope that this practice is continued.
14. To give further chance to young scholar at least for the second time of sharing his experience at research field
15. The YS should be made to present their proposals for a much broader discussion of their topics. This will make it peer reviewed as well as being reviewed by the authorities
16. The young scholars and paper presenters can be assigned professional mentors from the team of qualified board members on ICT policy issues taking into consideration specific country contexts and the emerging policy issues. For example young scholars from Africa could be assigned board members/ experienced policy professors from Africa and the ones from Asia or Latin America the same.
17. Supporting next young scholars to connect with OBs [Board Members?] to collaborate diverse researches
18. Similar to the CPRsouth in Taipei, invite young scholars who became actively and successfully engaged in the policy reform process to share their journey. I think this would make it easier for the young participants to relate to their experience and aim for their achievement.
19. More exposure with policy practitioners from different governments or fields would be helpful for young scholars to get the ideas from the practical (e.g. open lecture, Q&A, seminars, mentoring etc.)
20. Maybe pair up a young scholar with a paper presenter for more mentoring opportunities for the young scholar and encourage collaboration between the two.
21. Involve past scholars and beneficiaries of scholarships to motivate young scholars.
22. Young scholars are given competitive grant to do their research (theses) or report

#### **b) CONFERENCE-REVIEW PROCESS**

23. Integrating professionals from different backgrounds
24. In Taiwan, there was a paper presented by the host organization but the paper did not follow the stipulated paper acceptance process. CPRsouth needs to be consistent in its rules to maintain the integrity and quality of papers.
25. In last three to four years, it has deteriorated
26. Improving mentorship process for paper givers. Right now there is too much variation in quality
27. Yes, screening should be more relevant by giving industry experience its due weight (and not merely academic!)
28. Do a rigorous peer review of papers
29. CPRsouth is a great platform and network for scholars and practitioners. So, quality papers and presentations (100%) matters a lot. Sometimes noticed that some (I will say few) of the papers are not up to the mark. So, I think CPRsouth should take strong position in selecting good quality papers.
30. A robust mechanism should be developed to find out promising papers and research works to avoid the monotonous rehashing of the similar findings that are reported over the years. CPRsouth should focus on incorporating dedicated young researchers to review the papers who would have time to comment for the betterment of the authors and the community. Also the scope of the papers / panels should be broaden.

### **c) CONFERENCE- SESSIONS/CONTENT**

31. It should continue with a broader focus of policy making for the upcoming technologies
32. ICT is very interdisciplinary domain, but other academic disciplines could hardly find their way to this conference
33. CPR south should target to address the problems we face in our countries on a day to day basis
34. Continue to have more discussions on current events / topics of interest
35. Case studies were very useful
36. Although I understand that the conference is more policy-oriented than theory(academic), I believe it will help to make a session specifically for theoretical papers; or may be just making 'theoretical input' a part of the inputs which the reviewers provide.
37. Accept papers from wider areas not only of policy related. Some papers which are not directly linked with policy however indirectly related and make greater role in policy formulation.
38. Yes perhaps CPR-south could have sessions on internet governance issues. I think there needs to be more wide interaction with the community prior and post CPRsouth in particular for paper presenters. The community also needs to grow in terms of new participants it brings, currently it looks very exclusive.
39. Varying topics on ICT for Development, especially on Education, Literacy
40. Panel wise selection in different corners of the conference so that the participant must select it according to their own choices and to select an appropriate mentor during the tutorial who really does know about the topic. Last time in Taiwan I faced this problem where my mentor did not have any single bit of knowledge regarding the policy which I presented including language barrier.
41. More small group break-out sessions, with a network to facilitate communication post-event
42. More sessions to interact with senior professors
43. More collaboration with Fellows will be useful.
44. I think a session on how best to engage with the policy makers, challenges faced by civil societies to get them into discussions and take relevant actions at local levels, how the individuals/ organizations can follow them up/pursue and affect policy making at local and national level.
45. Hold panel discussions that could take policy changes forward

### **d) POST CONFERENCE**

46. The organisation can develop an interactive blog where members can interact productively and benefit one-another
47. Post-Conference short Assignments and deadlines to young-scholar-participants
48. Participants of the Conferences should be engage in LIRNEasia research work.
49. Make the mailing list more active rather than a Facebook page.
50. If possible, introduce a journal so that people who cannot make it to a conference can still submit and participate in this sphere?
51. If possible please make a communication with the young scholars and paper presenters with the policy level peoples of the respective countries.
52. Identify how the papers / research presented can be socialised widely, by identifying what steps can be taken next to get the key messages out.
53. I think presenters should be encouraged to be collaborating even at international levels
54. Could the CPRsouth issues some articles or commentaries to introduce the outstanding CPRsouth participants every month or quarter including their research path or their update research outcomes through email? I believe it will be an effective way to encourage all the young scholars to keep on moving as well as setting a role model for them.
55. Constant in communication with the fellows so that they get motivated along with virtual participation even though they cannot attend the program. Also, a mass gathering of the scholars would be great.

## 56. Communication between conferences

### e) GENERAL

57. Participants are on full scholarship with their travel and accommodation paid by IDRC. Since there are no parallel sessions, participation in all sessions should be made mandatory.
58. Make the attendance compulsory for all participants.
59. Organize the next event other parts of Africa
60. Yes two of my junior researchers have benefitted after me
61. Thanks
62. So far, I am comfortable with the way the CPRsouth is organized and structured
63. Possibility of hosting in south East Asia so closer for Pacific Islands participation.
64. It's a great platform to learn and interact internationally. Should continue the great work.
65. It was wonderful learning experience and it was very well structured.
66. Finding a mechanism to ensure that the YS and PP participate in the entire conference.
67. CPRsouth conference should be more frequent

### 4.9. Suggestions for maintaining the network

In response to the question "" we received 58 suggestions as listed below. Some of them repetitions from the 'post-conference' suggestions in Section 4.8. There are suggestions for post-conference get together event, but who should pay for this activity is not addressed. The ideas for maintaining a sub group within LinkedIn is something and binging the community's attention to new developments within the group are doable suggestions.

#### List of suggestions for maintaining the CPRsouth network

1. Yes, Definitely
2. "Yes have some suggestions. 1. Need to engage the Young Scholars in writing proposals, research and for grant hunting
3. Identify and engage 'Young Scholars' for cross country research and projects. "
4. Yes better to have a meeting sharing experience
5. We can include a database of all the past and future participants so we can share information and for future collaborations
6. was very useful
7. Use a multi-stakeholder format (such as the IGF but in a much smaller scale) where policy makers, private sector, and state actors' representatives attend the conference to engage in direct discussions on the policy issues.
8. To nominate and award each and every year 1 successful participant who made the best out of it including alumni gathering once in a year. 1 successful alumni might have a chance to work as a research fellow based on her/ his policy paper along with the CPR South team in South Africa
9. There needs to be a group at any of the social network site to bring closer the people and ideas
10. There may be projects/research where participants can join and work in group from distance. It should be a formal research project and the outcome may be presented in good conferences.
11. There may be joint research organized across the operating geographies of the participants, in the ambit of the areas of interest for CPR. This will help the participants share their findings and get updated on the research areas.
12. There is need to organize a conference may be once every three years for past CPRsouth participants to brainstorm and share their experience on the policy issues affecting lives in their country contexts
13. There are should deliberate effort to galvanize mentors - mentee relationship within the group. Also smaller team across borders can be formed and research targets should be given to these groups to encourage research publications.
14. The alumni networks should be re developed.

15. That's the job of CPRsouth - I am not sure what it has done lately to achieve it so far,
16. Thanks
17. Stemming from the response to question 11, the blog can also provide useful information to members on research collaborations, opportunities etc.
18. Sharing of research & policy papers for the benefit of those who are still learning
19. Seems there are many one-time participants and some veteran participants but only a few participants who fall in between. My understanding is the people who are in-between, have experienced cprsouth a few number of times, want really to contribute to the policy arena. Maybe we should find ways to encourage them to write evidence based policy works - that will promote them and bring forth new ideas and issues and make a strong community.
20. Possibly registry of alumni will to be registered in repository of resources to people wishing to find out more about developments within countries,
21. Perhaps, we can receive updates about activities of CPRsouth.
22. Need to focus on impact, rather than scholarly article.
23. My involvement in ICT policies post CPRsouth was unfortunately limited as my work was in a different field. I would be very happy to collaborate with others in this network to develop knowledge in ICT policies over a period of time. If CPRsouth can facilitate this, that will be really useful.
24. More cross-country collaborations and funded exchange residencies.
25. More collaborative networking arenas
26. Maximize online presence- keep website up to date/ create local chapters of past scholars to make it easier for scholars in one country to collaborate or make database of past scholars searchable for the entire CPRsouth community/ reunions outside the once a year cprsouth conference- can be done on a per country level and not necessarily spearheaded by the secretariat but actively supported by it.
27. Make effective different social media group for all CPRsouth participants to discuss different policy and research issues.
28. Linkage with government in the respective participating countries be encouraged
29. knowing what the members are doing in terms of ICT4D
30. Just wish people in the network do keep participating /posting their work, challenges they face with the governments/policy making/grants/programme implementations etc. in the network for getting wider reflections and learning for each one of us. CPR network can also initiate online discussions every month on a topic and people can contribute which can be compiled to come up with best practices or possible solutions regarding challenges related to influencing policy making.
31. Invite past participants to work on projects that they can contribute to from their respective bases, setup a group where information useful information can be disseminated e.g., academic study vacancies, fellowship/internship positions, etc.
32. Introduce or improve communication network
33. Increased networking opportunities on an offline basis, mentor-ship, working together on projects etc.
34. Identify the policy and research interests of the YS and forward research areas and proposals to them for development not as an option but an obligation
35. I would think the same approach used by a university alumni association. You can start by register the alumni, develop an alumni database, and plan activities for them to contribute (seminars, discussion forum etc.).
36. I think that there should be a directory of topics that each participant is actively working on and a way to contact them since we are not all present in all of the CPRSouth activities.
37. Hoping Re-Union Programs during next ITS or CPRSouth Conferences (Such as special presentation session)
38. Formation of research teams and updating of databases.

39. For better collaboration, I believe community can be involved in the review of papers. As of now I believe the group handling the reviews is a closed community. Opening it to all the participants (as a second or third reviewer) will be a significant value add as well as keep the community alive.
40. Facilitating increased communication between past participants and information sharing amongst these participants
41. Establish a LinkedIn network for all active participants
42. Engage alumni in potential studies around the region.
43. Encouraging collaboration and cross country studies amongst participants. Announcing availability of funds or sourcing of funds for conduct collaborative work. Building a platform where people can post their expertise or cv something, showing area of expertise. Participants will be able to share publications or blog about hot topics. Share country experiences or ask for assistance for work they are involved in from a now expert on the platform.
44. Encourage CPRsouth scholars to engage in more non-academic writing / communication on policy issues, so that research and policy solutions can reach a wider audience. Maybe suggest a requirement of 2-3 articles (in the immediate year of participation, at least).
45. Enable more ways for participants to stay in touch following the conference
46. Creation of an online forum (e.g. Facebook Secret Group) where all CPRsouth Alumni can communicate, collaborate and share latest activities on policy issues in their Countries.
47. creating a database (or links) of paper/publication products
48. Create closed email list / news group or Facebook and disseminate all information there.
49. Create an online network.
50. Create an Alumni on Social Media like Facebook and Linked-inn making it accessible to connect, collaborate and work on mutual issues of interests.
51. Create a more interactive platform or work groups based on participants areas of topics that moves beyond social media platforms.
52. Create a LinkedIn (or similar) group for CPRsouth so that participants are updated of what each other is working on. This would hopefully help in raising awareness and encouraging collaborations. Also, maybe include a Social Media 101 course for academics and researchers to help them use online social networks for communicating their research and for reaching out to a wider audience effectively.
53. CPR Alumni- with online portal where paper sharing and co-authorship along with debate could run with some moderation- VIRTUAL platform yet real and effective.
54. Could we setting up a LinkedIn Group and shared our academic viewpoint or outcomes there?
55. Collaborate more with other countries
56. A get-together conference after some years, e.g. every four years, where participants are to do poster-presentations on what they have been up to with regards to their work within the CPRSouth scope.
57. 10th year workshop to gather everyone (without paper submission but for pure networking) would be good. A web page to look up former participants and to link them, besides Facebook, would also be good.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

After 10 conferences, CPRsouth has brought together 400+ communication policy researchers, potential or established. The overarching finding from this survey is the higher performance of 45 young scholars who returned as paper presenters at subsequent conference, as compared to those who attended as paper presenters only or as young scholars only. It is testimony to the tutorial program aimed at these young scholars, but suggestion for improvements suggest that there is much room for improvement.

Comments regarding the young scholar program are focused on two main themes: More hands-on activities in the curriculum and more opportunities to interact with experienced scholars. (We leave the comments on the review process, sessions and post-conference session for interpretation by the funders and the Board of Management.)

In the recent knowledge mapping report to the board, the author recommended that CPRsouth build on the core of five institutions and the 48 researchers who have presented more than once. However, the findings of this tracer study clearly point to the importance of better preparing young scholars and helping more of them to come back as paper presenters. Such paper presenters would make the community stronger (as judged by the higher response rate of this group) and more effective in taking research to policy as indicated by their response to policy outputs and policy changes questions.

The improvements to the tutorials should take heed of the calls for more interactivity in the tutorials. Sessions on how the policy process works; Writing a policy brief; Being part of an international community and Cross-country comparisons and benchmarking are rated high, but sessions of data and data analysis (Demand, side, supply side, qualitative analysis, legal analysis, etc.) are not rated as high. One solution would be to devote one whole day to work with the young scholars on their research questions, literature reviews and data collection and analysis strategies on one-on-one and in groups, before a second day devoted sessions on data collection and data analysis. This way the young scholars would be better prepared to absorb new information.

Judging by the lower percent of paper presenters engaged in producing policy outputs and initiating/catalyzing policy change - compared YS&PP group, perhaps the paper presenters could use more instruction and exposure to the policy process. If the third day of tutorials can be devoted to the policy process and policy research dissemination, and paper presenters who have not had YS training are given an opportunity to attend those sessions, they might do better at taking research to policy.

Finally, the difficulties in tracing past participants and the utility of the LinkedIn platform in finding information for non-respondents suggests that CPRsouth should mandate a complete profile on LinkedIn or platform as a registration requirement of all participants.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a) Make the young scholar tutorials more interactive.
- b) Assist young scholars to complete a research proposal before they leave the conference.
- c) Require all participants to complete their profiles on LinkedIn before they leave the conference. Create a CPRsouth group within LinkedIn.
- d) Do profiles of all or some of the 35 who reported achievements in policy change.
- e) Formalize the young scholar tutorials as a year-long process and rebrand it as the Communication Policy Research Academy or similar. Some services such as on-going research guidance can be offered for a nominal fee to cover costs.
- f) Devote a session to showcases evidence-based policy initiatives of past CPRsouth participants
- g) Receive responses of board members and funders to comments of 60+ respondents covering the review process, sessions and their content, and Post-conference issues.

## **APPENDIX 1: Letter to participants**

Dated November 4, 2016

Dear CPRsouth participant:

I write to request your participation in a tracer study of past CPRsouth conference participants.

As you are aware, this series of conferences were generously funded by contributions from IDRC and the countries that hosted each event. IDRC has rightly requested that we conduct a tracer study of all past participants before moving onto the next phase. In that regard, the response of each and every one of you is critical for the future of CPRsouth.

Please complete the online survey posted at <https://goo.gl/forms/xX4s6fDIDr5J04Mv1>. The survey will take only 5-10 minutes to complete, but will go a long way in furthering the cause of communication policy making in the global South.

I thank you in advance for your valuable contribution.

Sujata Gamage, PhD  
Coordinator  
CPRsouth Tracer Study



## APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire

November 2016

CPRsouth (or Communication Policy Research South) is an annual conference dedicated to building policy research capacity in the global south. The scope of the conference includes any endeavors to facilitate the use of information, knowledge or information communication technologies to improve the lives of people in the global South.

As a past participant in one or more CPRsouth conferences in the last 10 years, we are pleased to welcome you to the community of CPRsouth past participants. CPRsouth community is currently made up of about 600 scholars or practitioners from 54 countries in the global South. The information you provide through this survey will help us improve future CPRsouth conferences and identify ways to make the present community more effective in making a difference in our part of the world.

There are ten questions. Please answer all the questions as best as you can.

1. Name

Your answer

2. Email

Your answer

3. Mobile number (With country code)

Your answer

4.1 Current position

Your answer

4.2 Department

Your answer

4.3 Organization

Your answer

4.4 Country

Your answer

5. In which CPRsouth conferences did you participate? (Please check all that apply.)

	Young Scholar (YS)	Paper Presenter (PP)	Young Scholar and Paper Presenter
2007-1-Manila			
2007-2-Chennai			
2008-Beijing			
2009-Negombo			
2010-Capetown/Xian			
2011-Nairobi/Bangkok			
2012-Mauritius			
2013-Mysore			
2014-Maropeng			

2015-Taipei			
2016-Zanzibar			

(If you accidentally click a wrong button, you have to reload the page. Please accept our apologies for the inconvenience. \_

6. RESEARCH OUTPUTS: Since your first participation in the conference, have you completed, by yourself or in collaboration, any of the following research outputs on topics within the scope\* of CPRsouth? (Please check all that apply)

\*The scope of the conference includes any endeavors to facilitate the use of information, knowledge or information communication technologies to improve the lives of people in the global South.

- Journal publications
- Conference papers
- Theses completed
- Research/Theses proposals
- Grant proposals
- Grants, Received
- Technical reports
- Other
- Research outputs are not relevant to my work
- Communication policy is not relevant to my work

7. POLICY OUTPUTS: Since your first participation in the conference, have you used or provided, by yourself or in collaboration, any of the following policy outputs to support decision making on topics within the scope of CPRsouth, in your organization or in the wider policy arena? (Please check all that apply)

	Within my organization	Outside in the wider policy arena	Within my organization and outside in the wider policy arena
Policy papers/Briefs			
Policy submissions/Presentations			
Policy implementation			
Project implementation			
Op-Ed pieces in the media			
Interviews to the media			
Blogs/communication			
Other			
Work in progress			
No efforts yet			
Not applicable			

8. POLICY CHANGES: If your policy outputs led to any policy changes, however small, please enter 'Yes' in the first line, and describe the most significant policy change giving the 'Year, Policy issue and Policy change'.

The path from policy outputs to policy change is a difficult one.

If you have nothing to report please enter 'Not Yet' or 'Not Applicable' in the line below and move to Question 7.

Your answer

Year:

Your answer

Policy issue:

Your answer

Policy change:

Your answer

9. Do you plan to (or are you able to) engage in communication policy issues in the future?

Yes/No/Maybe

10. Of the following learning experiences at the CPRsouth tutorials or conferences, which ones did you find most useful. (Please check up to three items)

- How the policy process works
- Doing a literature review
- Using supply side data (institutional data, e.g.)
- Using demand side data (surveys of users, e.g.)
- Using legal documents or other documentary information
- Cross-country comparisons and benchmarking
- Doing qualitative research
- Writing a policy brief
- Policy processes in different countries
- Being part of an international community
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you have any suggestions to make the CPRsouth experience more productive or enjoyable for young scholars or paper presenters?

Your answer

12. Do you have any suggestions to make the international network of over 400 past CPRsouth participants more useful?