The Applied Communication Collaborative Research Unit (ACCRU) aims to link organisations with a stake in the application of communication to issues of inequality, vulnerability and deprivation. In doing so, ACCRU aims to build understanding, disseminate knowledge and build capacity in this critical area.

Harnessing the power and potential of communication to support imperatives such as poverty reduction, better health and conflict reduction represents one of the critical challenges of the 21st Century.
The Applied Communication Collaborative Research Unit (ACCRU) is a new research unit located in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Adelaide. It is dedicated to both promoting and understanding the role of information, communication and new communication technologies (ICTs) in processes of development and change. ACCRU draws together a group of internationally regarded specialists and emerging researchers into a new consortium dedicated to supporting the program, evaluation and research needs of a wide range of organisations that have a role in promoting communication interventions, across a wide range of themes and contexts.

ACCRU has worked extensively in the areas of disease prevention, health promotion, conflict prevention and peace-building, ICT and media policy development, media systems strengthening for better governance, in behavioural and social research, as well as in sectoral analysis relating of media sectors. ACCRU employs a wide range of qualitative methodologies, including participatory impact assessment tools, as well as action and ethnographic research methods.

ACCRU seeks to build capacity, especially in the areas of communication for development (C4D) and applied communication (i.e. health promotion), through research training and the provision of specialist courses. Our affiliated post-graduates are working in areas as diverse as establishing gender sensitive C4D indicators, the role of new technologies in farming and the role of youth mobilisation through radio.

ACCRU affiliates have worked with a number of well-known bilateral and multilateral organisations including: ADB, AusAID, DFID, GTZ, UNDP, UNESCO, WHO. In addition, affiliates have worked with: ABC International Projects, BBC World Service Trust, China National TB Control Program, Development Pathways, Hassall and Co., HLSP; Maxwell Stamp and Philippines National TB Control Program.
The aim of ACCRU is to link individuals and organisations with an interest in the application of communication to issues of inequality, vulnerability and deprivation. ACCRU seeks to engage both the research and practice sectors and believes that there are gains to be made in developing a network of Australian-based applied communication researchers and organisations and linking these to international bodies. In doing so, ACCRU aims to build understanding, disseminate high quality peer reviewed outputs and build capacity in this critical area.

The key objectives of ACCRU are to:

OBJECTIVE 1: Promote collaborative evidence-based research in the areas of applied communication and C4D across a range of Australian and international organisations.

OBJECTIVE 2: Foster collaboration and links between Australian and International applied communication researchers/practitioners and build a unique ACCRU digital platform for knowledge sharing and dissemination that will be the first of its kind based in Australia.

OBJECTIVE 3: Develop, commission and disseminate a range of knowledge products, such as peer-reviewed working papers, best practice briefs, key sheets and webinars based on existing and new research and practice.

OBJECTIVE 4: Support the research, evaluation, advisory and capacity development needs of partner organisations through the provision of technical advice, targeted research and the development of specialist training.

OBJECTIVE 5: Build applied communication and C4D capacity within Australia via the provision of postgraduate research training opportunities and post-doctoral fellowships.

OBJECTIVE 6: Network Australian and international applied communication and C4D specialists and gather them at periodic ‘themed’ workshops and conferences to foster collaboration and knowledge dissemination.
ACCRU is currently providing a wide range of services to a variety of national and international organisations. The summary of recent project activity (overleaf) demonstrates the depth of this service provision and its variety. ACCRU affiliates have long-standing experience in:

**Program Design** - in the areas of health promotion, disease prevention, communication for conflict reduction, peace building and reconstruction, media strengthening and disaster risk reduction (DRR), anti-human trafficking campaign, and media systems strengthening. ACCRU affiliates have long-standing experience of delivering designs to a range of bilateral donors.

**Impact Evaluation** - in designing and undertaking mid-term and end-line evaluations of C4D, ICT4D, health promotion and behaviour change interventions, as well as a range of media capacity development programs in the area of governance.

**Social, Behavioural and Sectoral Research** - ACCRU applies a wide range of participatory, action and ethnographic research methods in undertaking research work in support of C4D and applied communication interventions across a range of sectoral and development issues.

**Strategy and Policy Development** - in the areas of health promotion, C4D, the role of ICTs in poverty reduction, health communication interventions and in processes of humanitarianism, such as the role of communication in the provision of humanitarian information. ACCRU affiliates have long experience of communicating policy and strategy clearly and concisely for a wide range of bilateral and multilateral organisations.

**Advisory Support** - in the areas of health promotion, C4D, the role of ICTs in poverty reduction, media strengthening for better governance, pro-poor telecommunications regulation and in processes of humanitarian response. ACCRU affiliates are active in providing advisory support to a wide range of donors and international NGOs.
ACCRU affiliates have extensive experience in delivering research and consultancy outcomes for a wide range of organisations. Some of our recent project and consultancy work includes:

2012 AusAID and USAID - MTV End Trafficking and Exploitation Campaign (EXIT) - Team Leader for Independent Review of MTV EXIT Phase III Campaign and Phase IV design.

2012-14 Australian Research Council & SA Health - assessment of the role of social media and smart phone ‘apps’ to support healthy pregnancy in the context of social deprivation in the northern suburbs of Adelaide.

2011 AusAID & ABC International Projects - Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) - lead designer for Phase 2 of a regional program that supports the Pacific media and communications sectors. This program was ultimately granted over AUD$11 million funding to enable it to continue its work for another 4 years.

2011 ABC International Projects - Country Baseline Study of Pacific Media Sectors - This AusAID/PACMAS funded work focused on the development of short baseline datasets for each Pacific Island Forum country against which future assessment can be made. The work draws on UNESCO’s Media Development Indicators (2008) work.


2010 AusAID & ABC International Projects - Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) - Review of Phase 1 of the PACMAS program, including attendance at UNESCO World Press Freedom Day.
ACCRU affiliates are active in disseminating a range of findings associated with their research in a variety of formats. Examples of ACCRU outputs include:

The paper *Communication for Development Interventions in Fragile States: A Systematic Review* (2012) has recently been completed and results from an AusAID supported program of research. Authors: A. Skuse, D. Rodger, G. Power & D. Friguglietti.


Written for UNESCO, *Local Information Networks* (2006) is a book that looks at how ICTs are being incorporated into local communities in India and the potential technologies such as Internet have for new forms of social inclusion and dialogue. Authors: S. Nair, M. Jennaway & A. Skuse

Written for DFID, *Voices of Change: Strategic Radio Support for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals* (2006) examined the role that radio broadcasting - from national to community radio - plays in supporting development outcomes across a range of sectors and issues. Author: A. Skuse

Written for DFID, *Radio Broadcasting for Health: A Decision Maker’s Guide* (2004) assesses the support radio broadcasting can provide in addressing a range of health issues. The publication looks at some of the core principles associated with effective health communication and how they can be implemented. Author: A. Skuse

Written for DFID, *Working with the Media in Conflict and Other Emergencies* (2000) examines the role of media in supporting processes of conflict mitigation, reduction, humanitarian information provision and its role in disaster risk reduction. Authors: A. Skuse & G. Adam
A/Professor Andrew Skuse is Director of ACCRU and holds a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from University College London. His professional work focuses on how the poor interact with information resources and how these resources affect areas such as livelihoods, health, education, peace-building and social equity. Skuse has consulted widely on the role of C4D and ICTs in the developing world for numerous international development agencies, including ADB, AusAID, DFID, EU, GTZ and WHO. Skuse previously worked as a Social Development Adviser for the UK Department for International Development (DFID) where he was responsible for the area of communications for development. His publications span both applied and academic fields and he has worked in many countries, including: Afghanistan, China, Malawi, Nepal, Pakistan, Pacific Region, Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa and Sri Lanka.

Dr. Michael Wilmore is Associate Dean (Education), Senior Lecturer and Head of the Discipline of Media within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Adelaide. His work has focused on the development of media in Nepal and South Asia more generally. He is particularly interested in the uses of media by indigenous and other minority groups in post-colonial contexts. His research also looks in particular at aspects of community media development, including cable television and radio, as well as how people are using various Internet and mobile media technologies in South Asia. More recently he has become involved in a number of research projects related to the use of media in health communication.

Dr. Dianne Rodger holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Adelaide. Her doctoral thesis was a study of Hip Hop in Australia titled ‘Living Hip Hop: Defining Authenticity in the Adelaide and Melbourne Hip Hop Scenes’. She has held both teaching and research positions at the University of Adelaide, including a Research Assistant position on the jointly funded DFID (Department for International Development)/3ie/AusAID project titled ‘Communication for Development Interventions in Fragile States: A Systematic Review’. Most recently, she was appointed as a Senior Research Associate on a two year ARC Linkage project titled ‘Health-e Baby: Communication Innovation for Improved Neo-Natal Outcomes’. The study will explore the information needs and media uses of pregnant women who are cared for by staff at a major metropolitan hospital in South Australia.

Tait Brimacombe holds a bachelor’s and Honours degree (First Class) in Development Studies from the University of Adelaide. She is currently undertaking PhD research on the role of gender and communication for development in the context of the Pacific, with a specific focus on gender sensitive indicators and impact measurement. This work is being undertaken in conjunction with ABC International Development and focuses on the AusAID-funded Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS). Brimacombe has also worked in the area of social policy for Mission Australia and has coordinated the African Mothers Group in Adelaide for Lutheran Community Care.

Ronan Zagado holds a bachelor’s degree in Development Journalism, as well as a master’s degree in Community Development from the University of the Philippines Los Baños. He is currently undertaking PhD research on the role of new information and communication technologies and agriculture in the context of the Philippines. Zagado has previously worked for PhilRice as head of the Development Communication Division and was Program Director of the Open Academy for Philippine Agriculture (OpAPA). He has published widely in the area of agriculture and communications.
Natalie Greenland is currently a PhD candidate in the discipline of anthropology at the University of Adelaide. Her doctoral research focuses on radio for development in Nepal and the mobilisation of young Nepalis in nation building efforts across Nepal. Natalie has been working in the community sector since 2011 with a focus on housing research, advocacy and policy for vulnerable groups of people and those living with disadvantage. Natalie’s research interests include communication for development, youth, South Asia, radio listeners’ clubs, social policy, housing and refugees and asylum seekers.

Margarita Flabouris holds a bachelor degree in Communications Studies from the University of South Australia and a Graduate Diploma in Health Informatics from Monash University. She is currently undertaking post-graduate research regarding health professionals’ perceptions of risk in relation to the use of social media in health care. Margarita has previously participated in research in the area of health services research and has worked with clinicians in identifying enhancements in their practice to improve patient safety and patient outcomes. Margarita’s interest continues in identifying best practice initiatives to assist clinicians in their health care delivery.