Factors affecting evidence use for policymakers

INGSA & EAS
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@INASPIfo
Session objectives

Introduce INASP and our work on evidence informed policy

Your experience: what factors affect evidence use?

How can we address these issues?
Evidence and knowledge are central to solving development challenges.

INASP works to strengthen Southern research and knowledge systems.
OUR MISSION
To support individuals and institutions to produce, share and use research and knowledge, to transform lives.

OUR CORE PILLARS
Capacity building | Convening
Influencing | Partnerships
We aspire that by 2063, Africa shall be a prosperous continent... [with] Well educated and skilled citizens, underpinned by science, technology and innovation for a knowledge society”

Agenda 2063

STISA 2024
Meeting knowledge, technology and innovation demands in key sectors, improving STI readiness in Africa, implementing specific STI policies & programmes to address societal needs
Our trustees

- Jo Beall
  Chair
  Former Executive Director, Education and Society, British Council

- Anne Tutt
  Non-executive member, Audit Committee of the Department for International Development (DfID)

- Liz Carlile
  Director of Communications, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

- Felicity Jones
  Head of Development, mothers2mothers

- Tade Akin Aina
  Executive Director, Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR)

- Sohail Naqvi
  Rector, University of Central Asia

- Louise Shaxson
  Acting Head, Digital Societies programme, Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
What we do

We work to strengthen capacity across research and knowledge systems, with a focus on the following areas:

- Evidence for policy
- Gender and equity
- Higher education & learning
- Research communication
- Academic publishing
- Information access
Equitable systems...

include diverse voices

enable a diverse range of institutions to produce and use knowledge

make knowledge available in diverse ways

articulate local research agendas

The Rethinking Research Collaborative (RRC) is an informal international network of academics, civil society organisations and social movements, international NGOs, and research support providers who are committed to working together to explore the politics of evidence and participation in knowledge for international development. The RRC aims to encourage more inclusive, responsive and transformative collaboration to improve the production of useful research for social justice and global development.
Good partnerships require:

Clarity of purpose, open discussion of expectations, frankness about challenges

Preparedness to learn & willingness to change

Transparency and fairness with resources

Regular review and commitment to applying learning to improve

Equal respect and recognition of value of both partners

Image: VakaYiko Consortium partners at an annual consortium meeting in Accra, Ghana
Genuinely collaborative in design and implementation
Reflective, committed to learning and open to frank discussion
Improve our understanding of other sectors, fields, contexts
Interested in building long term relationship
Adding or building mutual capacity

We value partnerships which are...

Image: Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines working with local government officials to strengthen evidence use in education policy
What is ‘the demand side?’

Supply
Brokers
Demand
Systemic

Stimulating Demand for Research Evidence: What Role for Capacity-building?
Kirsty Neuman, Catherine Fisher and Louise Shaxson
Evidence use: some typical challenges

“As a technocrat, how can I convince policymakers that evidence is important?”

“We usually do not use research evidence when making decisions because research evidence is time consuming.”

“How do we manoeuvre evidence within a bureaucracy?”

“Politicians always have their way.”

“The research evidence might require some changes in the organisation and it is usually very difficult for any organisation to easily accept change.”

Quotes from civil servants INASP has worked with in Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe
Policymakers’ views

“You can do a beautiful research, if it is not involving government from the beginning, if it has not involved other stakeholders from the beginning, then its uptake will be seriously limited.”

“It’s not enough just to send the report and expect that we will all have the same understanding and all be on the same wavelength. We still need to talk about it, just so that ... have a similar understanding of what the results are saying to us”

“Probably they [researchers] think that...by publishing, the knowledge is out there, and then we can get it. But...not everyone has the ability to go [to] PubMed or Google and go through all the publications related to a certain thing”

https://www.ehpsa.org/critical-reviews/policymakers-and-evidence
Supporting institutions to adapt processes and systems to enable the use of evidence

Building the skills of public servants to access, appraise and use evidence

Strengthening networks and relationships across the evidence to policy system

Image: staff members from Parliament of Ghana and the South African Department of Environmental Affairs meet at an iNASP-hosted evidence informed policy symposium in Accra, Ghana
Our current work with governments

**Data for Accountability (DAP)**
DAP helps Parliament to improve quality of life in Ghana through evidence, using data to oversee progress towards SDGs.
*Partners:* African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (lead); Ghana Statistics Service, Parliament of Ghana. *Funder:* Hewlett Foundation
*Date:* 2019-2021  [https://www.inasp.info/data-accountability](https://www.inasp.info/data-accountability)

**Strengthening Evidence for Development Impact (SEDI)**
SEDI aims to strengthen the use of evidence in key sectors in Ghana, Uganda and Pakistan. *Funder:* DfID
*Partners include:* Oxford Policy Management (global lead); Economic Policy Research Centre (Uganda lead), African Centre for Economic Transformation (Ghana lead); Overseas Development Institute, 3ie
*Date:* 2019-2024

**Strong & equitable research & knowledge systems (SERKS)**
SERKS works to address the challenges of inequity within and between research and knowledge systems.
*Partners include:* Ethiopian Academy of Sciences, Uganda National Council for Science & Technology. *Funder:* SIDA
*Dates:* 2018-2022  [https://www.inasp.info/project/serks](https://www.inasp.info/project/serks)
Context Matters Framework

Participatory diagnostic tool to identify the best entry points for change

Drawing on literature review experience of 50+ policy makers and practitioners

Considers both internal and external factors as part of a systemic approach

Addresses both technical and political/cultural factors

www.politicsandideas.org/contextmatters
Examples: the demand side in detail
Watch this space...

- Evidence in parliaments: lively informal African network
- 8 new African projects funded by Hewlett Foundation
- DfID’s new SEDI programme in Ghana and Uganda
- Ongoing research from African Centre for Evidence at UJ
- Doing development differently: Thinking and Working Politically (TWP), Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)
- UK and EU conversations on evidence use: EU-JRC, Alliance for Useful Evidence
Some friends and partners working on evidence informed policy in Africa:

- African Academy of Sciences
- Actions pour l’environnement et développement durable (ACED), Benin
- African Centre for Evidence, University of Johannesburg
- African Centre for Economic Transformation, Ghana
- African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs, Ghana
- African Centre for Development Policy, Kenya
- African Centre for Systematic Reviews and Knowledge Translation, Makerere University, Uganda
- African Population and Health Research Centre, Kenya
- African Parliamentary Network on Development Evaluation
- Centre for Democratic Development, Ghana
- Centre for Evaluation, Learning and Results (CLEAR), South Africa
- Economic Policy Research Centre, Uganda
- Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration
- INGSA Africa
- Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA), Kenya
- Jimma University, Ethiopia
- PACKS Africa, Ghana
- Uganda National Academy of Sciences
- Zimbabwe Evidence Informed Policy Network

Image: members of Zimbabwe Evidence Informed Policy Network pictured with colleagues from the Ministry of Youth and Ministry of Industry and Commerce
Stay in touch

Reach out to INASP
Sign up for our newsletter or email ehayter@inasp.info

Explore the Rethinking Research Collaborative
https://rethinkingresearchcollaborative.com/

Join the Africa Evidence Network
www.africaevidencenetwork.org

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Image: participants at an INASP-led gender mainstreaming workshop in Accra, Ghana
Before you go...

Exit Cards

*On one side:* write down one thing you found useful about this session

*On the other side:* write something that wasn’t clear for you or that should be improved

Thank you! Your feedback will help us learn

Image: INASP staff members at an internal learning and reflection session