Strengthening the science/policy nexus

INGSA & EAS
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@INASPlno
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
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
Join the discussion

rethinkingresearchcollaborative.com
Our work in Ethiopia

Strong and equitable research and knowledge systems in the Global South (SERKS)
SERKS works to strengthen research and knowledge systems and address the challenges of inequity within and between research and knowledge systems.

Partners in Ethiopia: Ethiopian Academy of Sciences
Funder: SIDA
Date: 2018-2022
https://www.inasp.info/project/serks

www.journalquality.info  www.authoraid.info
Our vision for a strong, sustainable and self-sufficient Ethiopian research system is one which:

- Values, aligns and responds to Ethiopian needs, informs national policy, delivers impactful research in support of national priorities and operates within an independent space

- Recognizes and builds on the wealth and variety of knowledge within Ethiopia, while also looking to shape the future of research globally

- Is collaborative, participatory, and trans/multi-disciplinary in approach, recognizing that all types of research have a role to contribute to achieving national development needs

- Supports and sustains diversity and inclusion by creating a conducive environment that values and encourages all research voices – regardless of gender, institutional affiliation, or geographical location.
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.
Date: 2019-2021 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
Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) 2013-2017

LATIN AMERICA
23 public institutions in 11 Latin American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela)
Online training was run from Argentina

GHANA
Parliament & 27 ministries, departments and agencies

SUDAN
Ministry of Labour
Ministry of Education

UGANDA
Parliament

NIGERIA
Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) and Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA)

ETHIOPIA
Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health

ZIMBABWE
Parliament and 2 ministries

PHILIPPINES
Local policymakers from the Department of Education
Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP)
Across the three impact pathways, success followed when BCURE managed to activate a combination of ‘mechanisms’ [change processes]. These led to changes in skills, attitudes, behaviour and systems, which laid the foundations for more routine use of evidence in government.

Self-efficacy
Example: In Zimbabwe, training built officials’ confidence to use evidence in the Ministry of Youth, helping them work more effectively in their new roles as officers in a recently-established research unit.

Critical Mass
Example: In Kenya, officials in the Ministry of Health cascaded their learning from BCURE through adapting the training curriculum, mobilising financial support from a separate funder, and training county level policy makers in evidence-informed policy making.

Reinforcement
Example: In Sierra Leone, BCURE supported new Cabinet-level processes and templates, making it mandatory for line ministries to consider evidence in policy submissions. A new unit with the mandate to follow up on implementation created further pressure to comply.

Facilitation
Example: In Pakistan, BCURE developed data visualisation tools to help front line service providers understand what was happening on the ground – for example a dashboard showing tax collection by area, which helped officials manage staffing and performance.

Showcasing
Example: In South Africa, BCURE helped produce an ‘evidence map’ that gathered together diverse sources relating to human settlements. Learning was shared through reports and workshops, leading to demand for further maps by various ministries.

Adoption
Example: In Bangladesh, BCURE piloted an evidence training course that was adopted nationally and will reach thousands of civil servants each year. BCURE also co-developed evidence-informed policy making guidelines, which have been adopted by Cabinet with the intention of rolling them out across all government ministries.

Read the full evaluation, summary & brief: https://itad.com/knowledge-and-resources/bcure/
5 things we’ve learned

Image: interviewing smallholder farmers in Nepal (entry from AuthorAid Capture Your Research competition)
Moving towards a systemic approach

Stimulating Demand for Research Evidence: What Role for Capacity-building?

Kirsty Neumann, Catherine Fisher and Louise Shaxson

Abstract: There has been much focus among development practitioners on the supply of evidence to inform development practice, however, the need for robust and actionable evidence is often not matched by the demand. The aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between supply and demand for research evidence and to examine strategies for stimulating demand for research evidence. The paper presents a conceptual framework for understanding the demand for research evidence and outlines strategies for addressing the gap between supply and demand.

Introduction

Understanding the relationship between the supply of evidence and the demand for evidence is critical for effective decision-making. Evidence-informed policy-making requires a balance between evidence supply and demand. In many development contexts, the supply of evidence is often not matched by the demand for evidence.

What is evidence-informed policy-making?

Evidence-informed policy-making is a process that incorporates evidence from a variety of sources into policy decisions. This involves identifying the research evidence that is relevant to a specific policy area, evaluating the quality and reliability of the evidence, and incorporating it into policy decisions.

Supply

Demand

Brokers

Systemic
Thinking and working politically
Many of the officials involved in or responsible for drafting policy documents do not have the necessary skills or training and have no experience in evidence-based policy making.

Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 p18

The evaluation highlights the importance of following good practice in adult learning theory. Behaviour change is more likely where activities are closely targeted to individuals who can apply their learning because it is directly relevant to their day-to-day work, where follow-up support helps embed learning, and where training is practical and participatory, uses local case studies or live policy examples, and is delivered by good quality facilitators who understand the specific sector as well as the broader national context.

BCURE Evaluation, ITAD 2018
Capacity development is multidimensional

“There is a reliable body of evidence on individual EIDM capacity-building. To ensure application and sustainability of those skills, it appears justified to invest more efforts into building organisational and institutional EIDM capacities” Science of Using Science, Langer et al 2016

Lesson 3: Changing behaviour requires more than building skills through training

All six BCURE projects used training as a key intervention, but there were marked differences in the extent to which trainees were able to apply their learning. Where BCURE led to more routine changes in evidence access, appraisal and use, this was often because projects succeeded in catalysing multiple mechanisms together: building self-efficacy, providing tools that facilitated staff to do their jobs more easily, and tapping into or generating organisational incentives to reinforce behaviour change. In many cases, training did not lead to change in practice as a result of a broader environment unconducive to evidence-informed ways of working, and issues with training design and implementation.

BCURE Evaluation, ITAD 2018
Change happens both “top down” & “bottom up”
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
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Explore the Rethinking Research Collaborative
https://rethinkingresearchcollaborative.com/

Join the Africa Evidence Network
www.africaevidencenetwork.org

Image: participants at an INASP-led gender mainstreaming workshop in Accra, Ghana