Tools for Policy Entrepreneurs: The RAPID Alignment, Interest and Influence Matrix (AIM) etc

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The Context, Evidence, Links Framework

1. Understand the context

- **The external environment:** Who are the key actors? What is their agenda? How do they influence the political context?
- **The political context:** Is there political interest in change? Is there room for manoeuvre? How do they perceive the problem?
- **The evidence:** Is it there? Is it relevant? Is it practically useful? Are the concepts familiar or new? Does it need re-packaging?
- **Links:** Who are the key individuals? Are there existing networks to use? How best to transfer the information? The media? Campaigns?

The AIM Matrix

1. Identify all stakeholders
2. Map them onto the alignment / interest matrix
3. Identify who has power
4. Identify who you can influence

Sustainable Pastoralism

- Develop a Community of Practice
- Media, dissemination, information
- Tough!
- Pilots and evaluations of projects

Outcome Mapping

OUTCOME MAPPING: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs
Sarah Earl, Fred Carden, and Terry Smutylo

**Force Field Analysis**

Your influence on the force

Positive forces

- Funds
- CSOs
- Public demand

Negative forces

- Minister of Trade puts forward pro-poor trade and complementary policy programme to the cabinet by April 2008

Your influence on the force

**SWOT Analysis**

- What type of policy influencing skills and capacities do we have?
- In what areas have our staff used them more effectively?
- Who are our strongest allies?
- When have they worked with us?
- Are there any windows of opportunity?
- What can affect our ability to influence policy?

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**Learning: After Action Review**

An after action review asks 4 simple questions:

- What was supposed to happen?
- What actually happened?
- Why was there a difference?
- What can we learn from it?

**Impact: stories of change**

1. Stories of change:
   - Situation before
   - Context
   - Situation after
   - What changed and why
2. Most significant change (Davies)
   - Stories of change from different stakeholders
   - Systematic analysis of significance.
3. Micro-narratives (Snowden)

http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf

**Exercise**

With your neighbour:

1. Tell each other about recent work where you were trying to generate or use research-based evidence to make or influence a decision or action.
2. Choose one example to work on.
3. Try out the CEL Framework or AIIM Matrix.
4. See if it works / helps to identify things you didn’t already know, or see them in a different light.
5. Think about if / how you might apply it more thoroughly.
6. Think about what you might like to say about it.

**How to do it**

**CEL Framework**

1. Try to identify some factors in each of the dimensions of the framework which might influence research use.
2. Try to identify the most important.
3. Think about the implications for your work.

**AIIM**

1. List all the stakeholders.
2. Plot them on the matrix.
3. Identify those which are powerful.
4. Identify those you can influence.
5. Decide what you could do to improve the impact of your work.
Key Questions for the Context, Evidence & Framework

Simple Questions:
- **The external environment**: Who are the key actors? What is their agenda? How do they influence the political context?
- **The political context**: Is there political interest in change? Is there room for manoeuvre? How do they perceive the problem?
- **The evidence**: Is it there? Is it relevant? Is it practically useful? Are the concepts familiar or new? Does it need re-packaging?
- **Links**: Who are the key individuals? Are there existing networks to use? How best to transfer the information? The media? Campaigns?

Detailed Questions:

**External Environment**
1. Who are main international actors in the policy process?
2. What influence do they have? Who influences them?
3. What are their aid priorities and policy agendas?
4. What are their research priorities and mechanisms?
5. How do social structures and customs affect the policy process?
6. Are there any overarching economic, political or social processes and trends?
7. Are there exogenous shocks and trends that affect the policy process?

**Context**
1. Who are the key policy actors?
2. Is there a demand for research and new ideas among policymakers?
3. What are the sources of resistance to evidence based policymaking?
4. What is the policy environment: structures, processes, legal framework and opportunities for input into formal processes?
5. How do national and community-level political, social and economic structures and interests affect the room for manoeuvre of policymakers?
6. Who shapes the aims and outputs of policies?
7. How do assumptions and prevailing narratives influence policymaking; to what extent are decisions routine, incremental, fundamental or emergent, and who supports or resists change?

**Evidence**
1. What is the current theory or prevailing narratives?
2. Is there enough evidence (research based, experience and statistics)? How divergent is it?
3. What type of evidence exists? What type convinces policymakers? How is evidence presented?
4. Is the evidence relevant? Is it accurate, material and applicable?
5. How was the information gathered and by whom?
6. Are the evidence and the source perceived as credible and trustworthy by policy actors?
7. Has any information or research been ignored and why?
The Alignment-Interest and Influence Matrix (AIIM)

AIIM helps to Identify and prioritise your target audience

- **Alignment**: Do they agree with our approach? Do they agree with our assumptions? Do they want to do the same things that we think need to be done? Are they thinking what we are thinking?

- **Interest**: Are they committing time and money to this issue? Do they want something to happen (whether it is for or against)? Are they going to events on the subject? Are they publicly speaking about this?

Using the Tool

**What do you need?**

- A flipchart & markers of different colours
- A diverse group with knowledge on the topic to address

**Process**

1. List all the relevant policy actors who participate in and around the process
2. Map the actors on the Matrix according to their current behaviour (consider evidence of their attitudes, discourses, procedures, policy documents, strategies or budgets, and their general behaviour).
3. Identify the most influential actors by highlighting them with a star or a circle around them (using a marker).
4. Identify the actors that you (or your close partners) work with directly or that you have direct access to.
5. Consider how you might want these actors to change in terms of movements along the matrix
6. Consider what should be done with each in order to achieve the desired changes: learn in partnership, develop enthusiasm, challenge beliefs, or simply develop awareness.
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