Knowledge vs Politics: How Research can Contribute to Better Policy

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Power, Politics and evidence use

Knowledge intermediaries and interactions

Evidence production and communication
1. Policy processes are complex...

- Identify the problem
- Commission research
- Analyse the results
- Choose the best option
- Establish the policy
- Implement the policy
- Evaluation
1. Policy processes are complex…

Identify the policy you want to implement
  ⟷ Commission research
  ⟷ Massage the results
  ⟷ Media campaign
  ⟷ Establish the policy
  ⟷ Implement the policy
  ⟷ Avoid evaluation
1. Policy processes are complex...
1. Policy processes are complex...

“The whole life of policy is a chaos of purposes and accidents. It is not at all a matter of the rational implementation of the so-called decisions through selected strategies”

2. Research

Kate Bird et al, Fracture Points in Social Policies for Chronic Poverty Reduction, ODI WP242, 2004
(http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/working_papers/wp242.pdf)
2. Research plays a minor role

Policy makers practically incapable of using scientific evidence because of the 5 Ss:

- Speed
- Superficiality
- Spin
- Secrecy
- Scientific Ignorance

Vincent Cable – Lib. Democrat MP & Secretary of State for Business Innovation & Skills
2. Research plays a minor role

Source: Phil Davies Impact to Insight Meeting, ODI, 2005
2. Research plays a minor role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Policy Makers</th>
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<tr>
<td>• ‘Scientific’ (Context free)</td>
<td>• Colloquial (Contextual)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Proven empirically</td>
<td>• Anything that seems reasonable</td>
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<td>• Theoretically driven</td>
<td>• Policy relevant</td>
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<td>• As long as it takes</td>
<td>• Timely</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Caveats and qualifications</td>
<td>• Clear Message</td>
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Source: Phil Davies Impact to Insight Meeting, ODI, 2005
3. But research can have huge impact

The Tanzania Integrated Health Improvement Project

“The results of household disease surveys informed processes of health service reform which contributed to a 43 and 46 per cent reduction in infant mortality between 2000 and 2003 in two districts in rural Tanzania.”

TEHIP Project, Tanzania: www.idrc.ca/tehip
4. A holistic approach

External Influences
Socio-economic and cultural influences, donor policies etc.

The political context – political and economic structures and processes, culture, institutional pressures, incremental vs radical change etc.

The links between policy and research communities – networks, relationships, power, competing discourses, trust, knowledge etc.

The evidence – credibility, the degree it challenges received wisdom, research approaches and methodology, simplicity of the message, how it is packaged etc.
4. A holistic approach

External Influences

- Campaigning, Lobbying
- Scientific information exchange & validation
- Media, Advocacy, Networking

Politics and Policymaking
- political context
- Policy analysis, & research
- Research, learning & thinking
- evidence

links
5. Be a policy entrepreneur

- Storyteller
- Networker
- Engineer
- Fixer
- Researcher
6. Do things differently

- focus more on policy
- establish different incentives
- establish different systems
- spend more on communications
- engage with different actors
- produce different products
- be ready to seize unexpected policy opportunities and move very fast
RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach

1. Identify interesting case studies
2. Collaborative research with local stakeholders
3. Identify key policy objectives / messages
4. Engage with key policy actors
5. Identify interesting case studies
6. Help implement change
7. Do the initial research
8. Establish monitoring and learning frameworks
9. Map political context
10. Identify key stakeholders
11. Identify desired behaviour changes
12. Analyse internal capacity to effect change
13. Develop a strategy
RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach

For example:
- RAPID framework
- Drivers of change
- Power analysis
- SWOT
- Influence mapping
- Force field mapping

Establish monitoring and learning frameworks
For example:
- Logframe (flexible)
- Outcome mapping
- Journals or impact logs
- Internal monitoring tools

Analyze internal capacity to effect change
For example:
- Policy entrepreneur questionnaire
- SWOT
- Internal performance frameworks

Helping researchers become policy entrepreneurs
How to develop engagement strategies for evidence-based policy-making

Donors spend billions of dollars on development research each year, but what is the impact on policy? What really influenсes policy makers? Is it hard facts? Is it stories and anecdotes? What are they looking for, and how do they listen to, when considering policy options? Facts alone—no matter how authoritative—may not be enough. This Briefing Paper summarises ODI’s work on understanding how policy processes operate in the real world, as part of its mandate to inspire and inform policy and practice that lead to the reduction of poverty. DFID’s Research and Policy in Development programmes (RAPID) helps other organisations, and ODI itself, bring together high-quality applied research, practical policy advice, and policy-focused dissemination and debate. RAPID also ensures organisations have the skills, capabilities and networks necessary to engage successfully in policy discussions.

The Briefing Paper concludes five years of work (see Box 1) overleaf into six key lessons that are essential to any researcher or organisation wishing to generate evidence-based policy, and on an eight step approach for policy entrepreneurs wishing to maximise the impact of research on policy. This is known as the RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach (ROMA).

Key points
- Researchers and policy-makers are missing chances to turn research findings into lasting change for the world’s poor
- Policy processes are complex and rarely linear or logical
- Policy entrepreneurs need to be strategic, systematic and flexible in design, monitoring and learning of policy engagement

Six lessons
- First, policy processes are complex and rarely linear or logical. Simply presenting information to policy-makers and expecting them to act upon it is very unlikely to work. While many policy processes do involve sequential stages—from agenda setting through decision making to implementation and evaluation—some stages take longer than others, and several may occur more or less simultaneously.
- Many actors are involved: ministers, parliament, civil servants, the private sector, civil society, the media, and in the development sector, also donors—all trying to influence this process, and each other. What factors and incentives influence and shape policy? How can these be marshalled to make them work for policy entrepreneurs? And what is the relationship between policy and evidence generation?
- Second, many policy processes are only weakly influenced by research-based evidence. An ODI study of factors influencing chronic poverty in Uganda found that only two of 15 were related to intervention gaps (Bird et al, 2009). In a talk on evidence-based policy-making at ODI in 2008, Vincent Cable MP (Cable, 2009) said that policymakers face difficulties when they try to engage with evidence-based approaches.
Transdisciplinarity

From: Lessons from deliberative public engagement work. Ajoy Datta ODI WP 338 2011

Source: Halberg and Larsen (2002).
Earthquakes without frontiers

**Vision**

Comprehensive knowledge of the hazards and their context

Appropriate and effective pathways to resilience

A global partnership of people and organisations that can help

Bam 2003; 30,000 killed out of 100,000 population
EwF in China

What’s been done so far:
• Mapping faults by CEA
• Learning from the 2005 Sichuan EQ by China Social Work Research Centre
• Visit and meetings in Xi’an
• Meeting in Beijing
• Establishment of team and country-coordinator
• Mapping of faults

What will be done:
• Recruit local researcher
• Comparison of response in 2005 and 2013 by CEA
• More mapping of faults and SS research.
• ‘Writeshop’ to gather existing knowledge
• Stakeholder meetings
• Establishment of EQ research centre

http://ewf.earth.ox.ac.uk
# Indonesia Knowledge Sector Initiative

**Goal**
Indonesia has the capacity to develop effective and socially accountable policies that meet priority development needs.

**Purpose**
Indonesia’s knowledge sector produces evidence to inform priority social development policies.

## Components

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<th>Supply</th>
<th>Demand</th>
<th>Intermediary</th>
<th>Enabling Environment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Selected organisations generate and communicate high-quality evidence to relevant policy makers</td>
<td>Selected government policy makers effectively demand and utilise high-quality evidence to inform social development policy</td>
<td>Selected organisations effectively translate the findings from research into policy options and policy options feed back into research</td>
<td>Important systemic and regulatory barriers to an effective knowledge sector are identified and mitigated</td>
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PHASE 1 (Six Years)
- Build up supply of high quality research
- Working dialogue on a national vision for knowledge sector development
- Identify priority policy reforms
- Start building constituents to advocate for priority reforms
- Provide sustainable funding for research organisations
- Commission studies to further investigate the sector, e.g.:
  o Revitalising or establishing a national research institute
  o GOI funding for research
  o Entry points for relevant civil service reform

PHASE 2 (Next Five Years)
- Assess investment for initial five years
- Building support for policy makers in society to implement reforms and build evidence
- Fostering broad engagement and the use of evidence in policy measures demonstrating policy success
- Decide on investment priorities to improve the evidence and knowledge environment by developing research and exploration
- Provide organisational and technical assistance for knowledge generation
- Expand regional collaboration and programs
