Research and policy

Global Development Network Topic Guide

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INTRODUCTION

'Evidence-based policy' has become something of a holy grail for policymakers intent on formulating pragmatic, effective policies which work on the basis of evidence rather than ideology. In the last decade it has increasingly been seen as both an indicator of and way of attaining 'good governance' across the world, and in developing countries in particular. The evidence-based policy agenda has been widely purported by international donors, who view it as a way of building the capacity of governments to formulate and implement pro-poor policies which target poverty reduction and ensure the responsible allocation of resources.

Also known as 'evidence-informed' policy, moves towards policies based on evidence have provided researchers, including those from think tanks, universities, and research institutes, with an opportunity to ensure that policies in developing countries are at least informed, to a degree, with some form of research-based evidence. Equally, pressure has been placed upon policymakers to move beyond policy expediency, and instead engage with research findings in order to arrive at decisions. The research-to-policy literature is vast, encompassing all policy sectors and all regions of the globe, and is therefore written from a number of perspectives for a variety of audiences, including researchers; policymakers; and donors.

This guide is concerned with the relationship between research and policy, and is predicated on the belief that policy *should* be based – or at least informed by – policy. It therefore presents some of theoretical basis upon which the evidence-based policy agenda is formed, as well as the relevant critiques of this approach. It considers, from the point of view of the researcher, how to influence policy using research, while offering guidance on how to approach the building of capacity in this field.

THE GUIDE

This guide was prepared by a transnational team comprising of researchers from CIPPEC and Mendizabal Limited on behalf of GDNet. It is intended to provide a non-exhaustive and evolving overview of the literature which shapes and forms the current discussions concerning the research and policy interface; and identify a number of key issues for the Global Development Network (GDNet) to pursue further as part of its evolving research agenda in this area. The guide attempts, where possible, to showcase literature from rather than on developing countries, with a further call for additional southern literature in planned the near future.

The guide is organised under five key headings (Research agenda and prodution; Research in the policy process; The communication of research; The M&E of policy research; and capacity building) and a number of pertinent sub-topics identified by the research team. Key texts and perspectives on each of the issues have been selected and presented in summary form, alongside an introductory overview of each issue discussed.

The 12 topics presented reflect an iterative discussion which took place amongst the research team in November. Starting with a tentative list of potential areas to cover, based for instance on a review of contemporary debates amongst online communities, the team were able to collectively refine the focus and scope of the initial list. The issues presented in the guide reflect further refinement during the subsequent literature identification and review process.

Guided by a tentative list of issues, the research team undertook an extensive review of the literature in each area, with the aim of including between 10-15 summarised references. Literature was found on the following bases:

- Prior knowledge, with team members responsible for areas they were most knowledgeable in;
- Recommendations from experts (researchers and practitioners);
- Sourcing from online communities and community depositories, such as GDNet and the Evidence-Based Policy in Development Network;
- Literature searches, including journals and organizational websites.

In order to guide searches and selection of literature, a number of criteria were established. These included:

- **Types of literature**: the inclusion criteria included policy research papers, journal articles, evaluations, policy briefs, blog articles, magazine articles, workshop reports, conference proceedings, online community discussions.
- **Quality**: is the document/article well-written, accessible, and well-referenced?
- **Source credibility**: references in other literature; affiliation of author
- **Contribution and relation to the debate**: does the document/article offer a new perspective or offer a useful summary of the debate?
- **Guidance**: does the document/article provide tools and/or guidance for researchers and/or communicators of research?
- **Language:** English or Spanish, with translations where possible
- **Southern origin**: is the document/article written by a southern author or does it offer a southern perspective?

Some documents appear more than once due to their cross-cutting nature. It is also important to note that the guide is evolving, with relevant literature being added on a rolling basis.

RESEARCH AND POLICY: AN OVERVIEW

The term 'evidence-based policy' gained political currency in the UK under the Blair administration in 1997, intended to herald a modernizing, forward-thinking government who invited 'outside' experts to inform policy, based on the premise that it is desirable for policy to be formed on the basis of a review of evidence and rational analysis. In the last decade the concept has become increasingly prominent in relation to developing countries, where policy based on evidence is thought to be even more significant due to the greater potential for change than in their developed country counterparts. The received wisdom surrounding the evidence-based policy agenda is that in order to reduce poverty and accelerate economic growth adequate policies need to be in place; and that a better utilization of evidence is required in the formulation of these policies.

Although there is considerable debate as to what counts as 'evidence', evidence-based policy is often characterized by a political environment in which the links between research and policy (or researchers and policymakers) are strong. In developing countries, research often plays a weak role in policymaking, and as a result policies are not well-targeted, sufficiently-

resourced, appropriate or timely. Carden (2009) identifies a number of reasons for this, citing factors such as non-inclusive governments with short democratic precedent; the role of donor actors in constraining the autonomy of policymakers in the policy process; large staff turnovers in both research and government leading to weak relationships and also 'brain drain' to foreign countries with better prospects; the personalization of politics, in which corrupt practices rather than evidence determine policy decisions; researchers lacking legitimacy amongst policymakers; a lack of hard data for researchers to use; a lack of demand for research; institutionalized interactions between researchers and policymakers are missing; and there is little use of intermediaries to transfer research to policymakers. These problems are often conceived as relating to three over-arching factors: problems relating to the supply of research; problems relating to demand for research; and problems relating to bridging the 'gap' in-between.

As an introduction to the discussions it is worth presenting a number of key insights which best represent the starting point of many current research-to-policy debates, and which the guide will further extrapolate:

1. There is no 'best practice' when it comes to linking research to the policy process. Policy influence is a process rather than a product, involving multiple relationships and various activities. Influencing policy must be understood as a way of achieving an objective rather than an objective in-itself. It takes time and a long-term strategy.

2. Though this may not be desirable, the reality is that research is not the only one element in what is a fiercely complicated mix of factors and forces behind policy decisions. Policies are often far from a government's original intention or design. Engaging with the policy process means also engaging with this reality (Mendizabal, 2012) (Carden, 2009).

3. For this reason, it is a mistake to approach policy as a rational, orderly, or unitary and linear progression from the statement of a problem to a decision and solution. The formation of policy is actually much more complex and non-linear (Sutton, 1999).

4. It is important to acknowledge that 'research' is not pure, monolithic, or singleminded. Research is infused with diverse intentions, motives, and expectations.

5. Analyzing the factors which influence the relationship between research and policy is important in understanding how the two relate. A much-cited framework has been developed by the Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) programme at the Overseas Development Institute, citing three overlapping areas: the political context; the evidence; and the links between policy and research communities, all within a fourth set of factors: the external context (Court et al, 2004).

RESOURCES

Sutton, R. (1999). The Policy Process: An Overview. London: Overseas Development Institute.
Access online

This ODI paper presents an important introduction to past and current understandings of the policy process, how policy is formed, and how policy changes. Its main contention is that the traditional 'linear' view of policymaking does not reflect policy realities which alternative approaches are based. The 'linear' or rational model consists of a number of stages which include: recognizing and defining the nature of the issue to be dealt with; identifying possible courses of action to deal with the issue; weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of each of these alternatives; choosing the option which offers the best solution; implementing the policy; and evaluating the outcome. The paper then reviews five cross-cutting themes: (a) the dichotomy between policy-making and implementation; (b) the management of change; (c) the role of interest groups in the policy process; (d) ownership of the policy process; and (e) the narrowing of policy alternatives.

Solesbury, W. (2001). Evidence Based Policy: Whence it Came and Where it's Going. ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice. London: Queen Mary University.
Access online

This concept of 'evidence-based policy' has been gaining currency over the last decade, particularly as the agenda has moved on to a concern with policy delivery as much as with its policy development. From the research perspective, more particularly that of social science, there has been a drive by funders of research for researchers to undertake what is considered 'useful' research, research that helps us not just to understand society but offers some guidance on how to make it better. This has come with a realization that to be useful research must be usable. Thus, academic researchers are increasingly engaging in ways that users of research find helpful. For instance, how to structure a report, write in plain English, and make a five minute presentation are now seen to be as important as how to design a questionnaire, conduct an interview or analyze data. To a large extent this can be attributed to the arrival of the pragmatic and non-ideological government of New Labour in the UK in 1997, when civil servants were encouraged to open up the policy process to outsiders to provide 'evidence' (wider than 'research'). Evidence is no doubt an important part of the weaponry of those engaged in policy discourse, but is a weapon that must be used with care as with other sources of power.

Sophie Sutcliffe and Julius Court (2005). Evidence-Based Policymaking: What is it? How does it work? What relevance for developing countries? London: ODI.
Access online

This paper considers the origins of the evidence-based policy concept and the factors which contribute to its continued use. It also highlights three main issues surrounding the use of evidence-based policy (EBP):(i) What evidence is used in the policymaking process?*(ii) How is evidence incorporated into policymaking; and (iii) factors other than evidence that influence policymaking. It is important to acknowledge that at each stage of the policy cycle, a number of different factors will also affect policy. This occurs at an individual level – for example, a policymaker's own experience, expertise and judgement; and at an institutional level, for example in terms of institutional capacity. There are also a number of constraints to the influence of research on policy - for example, the pressure to process information quickly. However, despite there being challenges to creating an EBP approach, it is generally seen as a desirable approach to achieve development outcomes. Policymakers need to develop their capacities to use evidence, and in the UK government a number of tools are employed to this

end. These include impact assessments and appraisals; risk assessments; gender mainstreaming; policy pilot studies; and community engagement. However, the authors note that evidence-based policy is not always directly transferable to developing countries, as capacity is more limited and resources scarce. Thus, approaches need to be adapted in order to ensure relevance to political realities.

Enrique Mendizabal (2012). 'Politics of the evidence-based policy mantra'. Onthinktanks blogpost. October 17th 2012.
Access online

In this blog article the author considers criticisms of the evidence-based policy 'mantra'. Concerns regarding the discourse include that it is anti-democratic, narrowing participation down to 'experts' rather than the public; that it is difficult to 'export and attempt to apply' the evidence-based policy ideal to all contexts where institutional structures simply do not exist; the assumption that evidence-based policy works 'better' to deliver measurable development outcomes, ignoring other factors such as political repression and human rights abuses; and finally, that actually evidence-based policy approached make it harder to think about policy in a nuanced way limiting the kinds of questions being asked about the actual factors that contribute to policy decisions. The author concludes by arguing that "evidence based policy is as ideological as the very approaches to policymaking it seeks to discredit."

Court, J., Hovland, I., and Young, J. (2004). Chapter 1: "Research and policy in international development: introduction." In *Bridging Research and Policy in Development*. Rugby: ITDG Publishing.
(Book form only)
Related brief: Access online

This introduction precedes a number of research-to-policy case studies based on the Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) team's work, which is premised upon the belief that a better use of research-based evidence in development policy and practice can help save lives, reduce poverty and improve quality of life. However, researchers often fail to see the importance of 'influencing' and communicating their work. For researchers to do this they must develop a detailed understanding of the policymaking process; the nature of evidence they have or hope to get; and all the other stakeholders involved in the policy area who could help communicate their work. The 'Context, Evidence, Links' framework developed by RAPID helps researchers do these things. In the course of their work, the RAPID team have replaced the traditional question of 'How can research be transported from the research to the policy sphere?' with a more complex question: 'Why are some of the ideas that circulate in the research/policy networks picked up and acted on, while others are ignored and disappear?'.

Carden, F. (2009). *Knowledge to Policy: Making the most out of development research*. Ottawa: IDRC.
Available online

The findings of this study are based on 23 case studies borne out of the IDRC's work on getting research into policy in developing countries. The case for evidence-based policy is made on the basis that development is based on good governance, which the IDRC's work on improving the role of knowledge for sustainable and democratic development attempts to

inform. Simply put, to improve lives, especially the lives of poor people, development research has to influence policy in order to influence development. The process by which they do this is less clear, however. The collection of case studies allow for a number of identifiable conclusions, the most important being that research can contribute to better governance in a number of ways: first, research encourages open inquiry and debate; second, it empowers people with the knowledge to hold governments accountable; and third, research enlarges the array of policy options and solutions available to the policy process. Thus, when research is well designed, executed, skillfully communicated, it can inform policy that is more effective, more efficient, and more equitable. Yet experience also leads to another conclusion: development research frequently fails to register any apparent influence. Secondly, the case studies show that things change, both in research and in policymaking, and research projects must adapt to their changing surroundings.

1. RESEARCH AGENDA AND PRODUCTION

In this section:

- Key factors influencing think tanks and policy research organizations in setting their research agenda
- What role can (and do) private sector actors & philanthropic organizations have in funding policy-oriented research?

1.1 KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING THINK TANKS AND POLICY RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS IN SETTING THEIR RESEARCH AGENDA

A research agenda sets out an organization's proposed areas of study, its priorities and direction, and defines its boundaries. A research agenda can be formulated at a number of levels – organizational, programmatic, project, individual, and more widely across a sector or region. While the extent to which research agendas are in fact articulated and/or followed vary, all organizations working at the research-policy interface must deal with issues relating to their independence and autonomy, policy relevance, and quality of research. In particular issues relating to independence are of paramount importance, with much of the literature addressing the degree to which research agendas are 'owned' by organizations in the face of complex relationships with funders, whether these are national governments, international donors, or the private sector.

The literature indicates that the definition of a research agenda is subject to two broad sets of factors: (i) internal, including an organization's mission and origins, funding model, particular researchers' interest and experience, and organization's values, beliefs, and ideology; and (ii) external, including the historical, political and cultural context in which the organization operates, windows of opportunity, relations with other stakeholders, and the dynamics or characteristic of research demand. The literature consistently emphasises the inter-related factors of organizational origin and funding model in considering how independent a research agenda (and therefore the research produced) is.

CONTEXT AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

There is a general consensus in the literature regarding the importance of contextual factors in influencing research agendas. National and regional history, political and cultural environment, and sudden windows of opportunity have great influence in the origins, characteristics and research of think tanks. Studies have highlighted the importance of historical, political, socioeconomic and cultural influences (Kimenyi and Datta, 2011) (Data, Jones and Mendizabal, 2010) (Botto, 2011), the role of donors and international discourses (Data, Jones and Mendizabal, 2010) (Braml, 2006) (Broadbent, 2012) (Ordoñez, 2012), national polices and the role of the state (Ali, Hill, Kennedy and IJsselmuiden, 2006) (Lardone and Roggero, 2011), and the private sector (Straface and Echt, 2011). Finally, others highlight a trend towards partisan politics (McGann, 2005), and an increasingly competitive environment which affects the way in which research organizations label themselves (Braml, 2006), both of which reflect upon the decisions made regarding the research agenda.

FUNDING MODELS AND RESEARCH AUTONOMY

Sources of funding appear to be the most important factor in the formation of a research agenda, or at least perceived to be. Funding from donors, private sector actors, and the government have all been seen as a threat not only to the objectivity of research outputs, but the questions being asked by researchers, and the way research is being framed. Addressing the relationship between sources of fund and independence is a key step for understanding restrictions and autonomy when defining a research agenda. The literature poses a number of questions, including

- how research organizations can diversify their sources of funding;
- how to deal with cooptation when working with state actors (Okechukwu, 2008);

to what extent funding and donor practices (especially international organisms?) shape national research agendas (Bay, Perla, and Snyder, 2008); and

- the impact of following donor demands on relations with national government (Straface and Echt, 2011).

Commentators have also explored different funding models as a way of mitigating against criticisms of partisanship, including 'virtual' and 'pop-up' think tanks, shared reserves, and emergency funds (London School of Economics) (Mendizabal, 2012).

INTERNAL CHARACTERISTICS DEFINING THE RESEARCH AGENDA

Internal characteristics are also influential in defining research agendas. Internal factors are those that reflect the identity, management, goals and activities of the organization, and are under the direct control of the think tank (Braun, Chudnovsky, Ducoté, and Weyrauch, 2010) (Struyk, 2006) and shape those issues on which the organization will work. Some studies highlight the weight of the characteristics of research management (selection of research topics, research process and research characteristics) (Braun, Chudnovsky, Ducoté, and Weyrauch, 2010), while others analyze the role of ideology and party allegiance (Elliot, 2005).

The literature also suggests that it is possible to introduce organizational processes in order to balance autonomy and heteronomy in defining a research agenda ([Straface and Echt, 2012](#)).

THE ROLE OF STATE FUNDING AND RESEARCH POLICY

Research organizations engaged in policy research interact with national (and subnational/local?) governments in varying degrees and for a number of purposes. This can take the form of partnership in implementing or planning a project, being directly or indirectly funded to undertake research in specific areas or for a specific purpose, or informally collaborating in research and policy processes. Due to these wide-ranging links, governments can have a specific interest in an organization's research agenda, sometimes framed by a policy on research priorities across sectors ([National Health Institute, 2007](#)). The literature poses a number of critical questions in regard to the role of the government in defining research agendas and policy at national level, including whether it is possible to gear policy towards how researched produced is used ([Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009](#)), and whether close relationships between producers of policy research and governmental actors inhibits the former's willingness and ability to criticise the latter ([Okechukwu, 2008](#)).

TRANSNATIONAL AND COLONIZED THINKING?

In developing countries, clear national policies on research are often lacking. This means that it is left to researchers to define their own research agenda in the absence of a national level framework. Although there are a variety of ways organizations can and do this (Bhattacharya, 2012), in many cases international organizations fill this 'vacuum' by funding research and encouraging organizations to frame their agendas in accordance with international demands, including the use of seemingly 'western' narratives. International donors encourage this by offering research training programs ([Cáceres and Mendoza, 2009](#)) as well as technical support alongside research grants.

There are concerns that an organization wishing to access funds must 'internalize' particular perspectives, concepts, and ideas, leading to a homogenization of research products coming from developing countries and the development of 'colonized' thinking. For many researchers, finding an authentic 'voice' in policy discussions led by the international community is a key concern, and recently the question of the participation 'southern' organizations in setting the global development agenda has been raised ([Ordoñez, 2012](#)).

RESOURCES

Context and external influences

Braml, J., (2006) 'U.S. and German Think Tanks in Comparative Perspective, German Policy Studies', Volume Three, Number 2, pp. 222-267.
[Access online](#)

What causes think tanks' different organizational and strategic patterns and how does it influence their behavior? Two main hypotheses are tested to answer these questions based on Braml's studies of German and U.S think tanks. Firstly, despite a clear trend of internationalization, think tanks remain nested in their institutional, legal, funding, labor, media, intellectual, and increasingly competitive think tank environment(s) and employ different and changing strategies to cope with and impact their changing marketplace(s) of ideas and resources. Secondly, different types of think tanks are settled in their distinct niches in the marketplace(s) of ideas and resources. The author identifies different environmental factors influencing the "opportunity structures" of think tanks both at the domestic and the regional/global levels, and some intermediary variables, which in their specific combination have a distinct impact on think tanks' growth, organizational and strategic behavior, and thus, the role(s) they can play.

Datta, A., Jones, N. and Mendizabal, E. (2010) 'Think Tanks and the Rise of the Knowledge. Economy Their Linkages with National Politics and External Donors'. In Garcé, A. and Uña, G.,'Think Tanks and Public Policies in Latin America', Fundación Siena and CIPPEC.
Access online

The aim of this chapter is to explore a number of hypotheses that explain the development of think tanks in different regional and national contexts in the developing world, including their research agendas. For this purpose the authors use the RAPID framework to understand the role of think tanks. The framework identifies four broad interlinked areas: (1) context (including politics and institutions); (2) evidence (research quality, researcher credibility and the framing of messages); (3) links (between researcher and policy maker communities either formal or informal, the role of intermediaries, networks and campaigning strategies); and (4) external influences (including the role of donors, international discourses, global political or economic shocks; but also socioeconomic and cultural influences). The report is organized geographically, beginning with Latin America, followed by Central and Eastern Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Northeast Asia. Finally, authors share main lessons for donor and for think tanks.

Broadbent, E., (2012) 'Research-based evidence in African policy debates. Case study 3: The contemporary debate on genetically modified organisms in Zambia'. London: EBPDN/Mwananchi
Access online

What is the role of the 'policy influence narratives' in shaping scientific debates? This case study considers contemporary discussions surrounding Zambia's acceptance of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The characteristic of the debate is that evidence on respective sides, supporters and opponents of GMOs; it is thought to be selective; and is used with the intention of supporting a position formed prior to any review of existing evidence. The debate lends itself to the selection and dismissal of evidence on the grounds that it is either invalid or not part of the relevant 'discourse'. While – and probably because – this national debate showcases a great use of evidence, there is considerable scope to suggest that evidence selection is based on economic interests. However, the author concludes that this is not unsurprising, or illogical, but rather in keeping with an emphasis within international circles on communication, persuasion and evidence based policy, which lends itself to the partisan use of evidence in order to achieve maximum 'impact'.

McGann, J., (2005) 'Think Tanks and Policy Advice in The U.S'. Thank Tanks and Civil Societies Program Foreign Policy Research Institute. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania.
Access online

After presenting a classification of US think tanks, the study identifies a number of external changes that have presented the think tank community with new challenges and opportunities that influence the ability of these organizations to effectively operate. Two changes are important in terms of definition of a research agenda. Firstly, funding changes that lead to short term, project specific and results driven grants; that increased policy orientation and focus on current issues and legislative agendas; generated a lack of long run, and general institutional support tends to distort the mission and research agenda of many think tanks; limited the depth of analysis and innovation within think tanks; and increased the influence of donors on research design and outcomes. Secondly, an increase in partisan politics; that has forced some think tanks to conduct more focused research and analysis and to be increasingly cautious of how and when to disseminate ideas; and increased pressure to politically align/difficulty to remain nonpartisan.

Ali, N.; Hill C.; Kennedy, A. and IJsselmuiden C. (2006) 'What Factors Influence National Health Research Agendas in Low and Middle Income Countries?'. Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED).
Access online

Reflecting on case studies in Cameroon, Cuba, The Gambia, Laos, Nicaragua, and the Philippines, the authors argue that health research in many developing countries faces two major challenges: a) a lack of clarity on national health research priorities; and b) the undue influence of international health research programmes, that fail to take account of these health research needs. Consequently, health research in developing countries is often not aligned with health research priorities in these countries. The authors reflect on how countries, international donors and programmes can take action in setting strategies for developing national health research agendas that address priority health needs.

Botto, M. (2011) 'Think tanks in Latin America: comparative radiography of a new political actor', in Correa Aste, N. and Mendizabal, N., *Vínculos entre conocimiento y política. El rol de la investigación en el debate público en América Latina*. **CIES, ODI, UP and EBPDN.**
Access online
(In Spanish)

The author has carried out a comparative study in nine Latin American countries to determine the existence of particular characteristics of think tanks in the region. In relation to the definition of research agendas, the study argues that the mark of origin strongly determines and influences the academic production in terms of agenda, motivations and strategies. However, think tanks' life stories and performances demonstrate a learning process in which, facilitated by the passage of time, think tanks will expand and diversify their agendas, rather than specialize in one subject. The expansion and diversification of this agenda appears as the result of exogenous factors rather than endogenous to the institution, such as a combination of international funding trends and requirements of the regional political context.

Kimenyi, M. S. and Datta, A. (2011) 'Think tanks in sub-Saharan Africa: How the political landscape has influenced their origins'. London: Overseas Development Institute (ODI).
Access online

Rather than starting with the think-tank as the central unit of analysis, the authors first focus on the political environment and identify how this has influenced the character of think-tanks. Drawing on an exploratory review of the literature, they try to capture the broad political context across sub-Saharan Africa over the past five decades and assess what impact, if any, this has had on the origin and development of think-tanks. The authors uncovered two key factors shaping the context and its evolution: 1) the concentration of power across nation states and 2) the role of external influences.

Funding models and research autonomy

Okechukwu, I. (2008) 'Payment and independence: does a client relationship with government inhibit 'think-tank' criticism?', Occasional Paper No 15. Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA),
Access online

The study explores how policy research institutions will be challenged to retain their objectivity on public policy issues regardless of their source of funds. Drawing upon Nigeria's experience under military government, this paper analyzes the relationship between privately and publicly funded think-tanks and government, and the extent to which that relationship may change commensurate with the extent of government funding. It investigates the extent of the real or notional independence of think-tanks. The author concludes that a transactional approach is necessary to understand the relationship between government and think-tanks, which in turn calls for analysis that is informed by a particular history and which examines the experiences of think-tanks in a specific country.

Bay, K., Perla, C. and Snyder, R. (2008) 'Who sets the intellectual agenda? Foreign funding and social science in Peru'. Providence: Brown University.
Access online

Does dependence on foreign funding lead to foreign control? This paper contributes to the study of the globalization of the social sciences by analyzing new bibliometric and survey data on Peru. The results of the analysis show that social science research in Peru is heavily dependent on foreign funding. Still, there is little evidence that this dependence results in external control over the intellectual agenda. A surprising multiplicity of diverse institutions fund research in Peru, and this pluralism gives scholars autonomy even in the face of strong resource constraints. Although resource constraints do not lead to foreign control, they are associated with conditions that have potentially harmful consequences for the quality of research. Five conditions are explored: multiple institutional affiliations, hyper productivity, forced interdisciplinarity, parochialism, and a weak national community of scholars. The author conclude that because of the formidable barriers to increasing domestic support for research, dependence on foreign funding is the most feasible option for social scientists in developing countries.

Mendizabal, E. (2012) 'Shared reserves and emergency funds: a new way of thinking about core funding'. Onthinktanks blogpost, April 6th 2012.

All think tanks want core funding. And all funders want to avoid making their grantees dependent on them and them only. In the meantime, think tanks struggle to create, by the most imaginative means possible, a cushion for hard times (and this is particularly relevant in middle income countries); while donors, even the most progressive ones, introduce layers and layers of reporting conditions to ensure that their funds are never misused. The consequence is that many think tanks are simply unable to build their reserves, and are forced to make safe but uninteresting strategic choices and unable to bid for large programs that may demand initial investments, and are therefore left at the mercy of northern or bigger think tanks or consultancy firms who can and then relegate think tanks to working on case studies or text-boxes. Based on this situation, the author makes two proposals for donors to consider: a shared reserves fund and an emergency-bridging fund.

Internal characteristics defining the research agenda

Braun, M., Chudnovsky, M., Ducoté, N. y Weyrauch, V. (2010) 'Far away from Thinktankland: Policy Research Institutes in Developing Countries. In Garcé, Adolfo and Uña, Gerardo. *Think Tanks and Public Policies in Latin America***. Buenos Aires: Fundación Siena and CIPPEC.**
Access online (English version)
Access online (Spanish version)

This study identifies the main factors that help policy research institutions influence policy making through the use of research. While focused in think tanks' policy influence, the study addresses the impact of some interesting variables related to this topic guide: the characteristics of research management (selection of research topics, research process and research characteristics), the link between funding and a long term research agenda, and the existence of political demand of research. A key factor in influencing policy is whether research management reflects a balance between continuity and adaptation because – while maintaining focus on their topics of specialization - think tanks also need to respond to the changing political and social environment to maintain their relevance and weight in the political and public arenas.

Elliot, W. with Hicks, S. and Finsel, C. (2005) 'Think tank typologies: which typology best fits with the mission and core values of NCAI Policy Research Center? A report prepared for the NCAI Policy Research Center'. Washington D.C: NCAI Policy Research Center.
Access online

Based on McGann and Weaver (2000) and Albeson (2002) typologies of think tanks, the paper seeks to provide recommendations as to models and characteristics that would be most useful to consider in establishing and implementing the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Policy Research Center. In so doing, authors address the characteristics the agenda setting and the research in different types of think tanks: ranging from 'driven by ideas', to 'by ideology', 'by party allegiance', or 'government contractor needs'. And they also analyze the relationship between those research characteristics and the think tanks' funding and ideology.

Struyk, R. (2006) 'Renewing the work program: creating innovation'. In *Managing think tanks: Practical guidance for maturing organizations***. OSI/LGI and The Urban Institute.**

Think tanks, like other organizations, need to renew their agendas for at least three reasons. First, they may have to shift the direction of their research in order to ensure that their work remains relevant to their nation's evolving policy agenda. Second, staff retention and morale can depend on key members having the chance to change the focus of their research and policy analysis. Third, in order to raise funds, organizations must offer to work on subjects for which there is a demand for new information and analysis—they must follow the market. This chapter addresses the task of fostering, developing, and assessing innovations at think tanks. And analysis how the characteristics of think tanks' work are related to their 'clients': national government agencies, local governments, donors, and businesses.

Straface, F. and Echt, L. (2011) 'Navigate politics with long term objectives'. Buenos Aires: CIPPEC.
(In Spanish)

How think tanks produce research as part of the policy making process? The authors argue that think tanks research agenda is the result of a game of different actors, a game in which think tanks manage a set of resources to offer, but at the same they have to deal with actors who have their own demands. This paper highlights a number of questions, including how the development of the party system influences research agendas, to what extent should think tanks respect international cooperation demands, and how to create equilibrium between heteronomy and autonomy. The authors suggest that think tanks should navigate political conjuncture with long term objectives that allow setting issues in the agenda. And share some organizational decisions and processes that could help think tanks to balance autonomy and heteronomy when defining a research agenda.

Research policies and public funds

National Health Institute (2007) 'Health research priorities in Peru: an analysis of the process'. Lima: National Health Institute
(In Spanish).

The document offers an example of a developing country state setting the research agenda. The Peruvian States sets the priorities and policies for health research agenda, including analysis and recommendations for health research policies. During the process, the State has exchanged ideas with other actors (researchers, NGOs, research centers, universities, policy makers, hospitals, international organizations), and looked into other national and international experiences to learn from them. The document includes an analysis of the stakeholders involved in health research and health policies; capacity of researchers; and capacities for using research findings. Finally, it addresses how priorities in health discipline can be translated to priorities in health research.

Lardone, M. and Roggero, M. (2011) 'The role of the State in the funding for research policy in Latin America', in Correa Aste, N. and Mendizabal, N., *Vínculos entre conocimiento y política: El rol de la investigación en el debate público en América Latina***. CIES, ODI, UP and EBPDN.**

(In Spanish)

Think tanks in Latin America are mostly dependent on private and foreign funding, while governments don't have a policy toward funding them and the social sciences sector as a whole. This is the conclusion that authors came to while exploring the role of the government in public policy research funding in Latin America. They found that governments in the region have a narrow view of research promotion so that regular public funding is mainly directed to "hard sciences", leaving a marginal share of funding for the social sciences. The authors identified two clear research funding mechanisms: programmatic financing on a stable, systematic and structural basis that works along a long-term, permanent policy on research as a tool for development of a country and which has a fixed allocation in the national budget through ministries, public agencies or universities; and non-programmatic financing that works in an unstable and non-systematic way, funding researchers on a project-to-project basis. The authors concluded that programmatic financing tends to favour research done in universities, well-established entities with fixed budgets, and "hard scientific" research.

Transnational and colonized thinking

Cáceres, C. and Mendoza, W. (2009) 'Globalized Research and "National Science": The Case of Peru'. *American Journal of Public Health*. Vol. 99, No. 10, pp. 1792-1798.
[Access online](#)

The study focuses on the role of the State and researchers in a context of research globalization in Peru, but also in the whole southern community. In particular, the author addresses the role of international research training programs. Potential issues associated with clinical trials conducted in the global south by organizations from the global north include co-option, lack of protection, and insufficient consideration of the risks incurred by research participants and inadequate discussions about the benefits of the interventions under study in the event they are proven efficacious. These issues stem from imbalances between rich and poor countries regarding sources of funding and research governance; the level of development of regulatory frameworks, among others. The author share some ideas regarding what the State and national academic institutions can do in trying to guarantee independence and pertinent research that can help to the development of the countries.

Ordoñez, A. (2012) 'Should think tanks be looking into the global development agenda?'. Onthinktanks blogpost, December 3rd 2012.
[Access online](#)

By reflecting on the 2012 Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group (WBG), the author asks why and how southern think tanks can get involved in the discussion of the global development agendas? Once we have a new global development agenda, who is going to make those changes happen? How can global goals be intertwined in national politics and policies? She concludes that is still essential for think tanks working locally to follow the international agenda for pragmatic reasons: it can inform their research agendas and funding strategy.

1.2 WHAT ROLE FOR PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS & PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FUNDING OF POLICY-ORIENTED RESEARCH?

Historically, philanthropic organizations and the private sector have been involved in improving the quality of life for citizens, while also wielding significant influence over social and political agendas at national, regional, and global levels. The private sector also funds significant amounts of research. The reasons for doing so inevitably vary, including:

- to promote innovation and increase opportunities for promising researchers (e.g. philanthropic organizations such as the Gates Foundation);
- to shape emerging thinking on a topic;
- to establish legitimacy and raise the profile of the company; and
- to enhance their own operational efficiency.

Research organizations are often willing to accept funding from the private sector, with some deeming it less politicised that state funding. As questions regarding the independence and autonomy of research that seeks to inform policy persist and research in developing countries continues to lack funding from the government, relying instead on backing from international donors, it is not surprising that the private sector is increasingly thought to have an actual and potential role to play within the research-policy landscape (Sanborn and Portocarrero, 2003) (Ogden, 2011). As development aid increasingly looks to new funding models, the private sector is thought to provide innovative approaches to the financing of initiatives (Adelman, 2009). However, the role of the private sector is not described only in financial terms, with their overall contribution to policy discussions being realized in areas such as climate change (Sierra, 2012)

While there are significant benefits of private sector funding for research, including plugging funding gaps, generating a greater density of research on particular issues, widening the research-to-policy space, addressing issues that are not on the mainstream agenda for international donors and national governments, and creating country-relevant research (Callahan, 1999; James, 2011), the role of the private sector in funding research also generates a degree of concern. Private sector funding does not preclude criticisms of partisanship, for the private sector (particularly in developing countries) often wields influence amongst policymakers due to the porous borders between the two. This creates doubt over the independence of the research they fund (Mendizabal, 2012).

The private sector is also thought to lack a sense of social responsibility, driven by a profit motive and therefore seeking to maximise economic gain rather than engage in pursuing uncomfortable truths which may threaten financial success. Further, multinational companies can use research to weaken national actors in the decision-making process, while allegedly 'co-opting' others (Broadbent, 2012).

In addition to this central debate, the literature also addresses the relative importance of research in the wider 'development' agenda of the private sector and philanthropy, which sees these actors investing heavily in social initiatives and social entrepreneurship and discusses the ways in which private sector-funded research has influenced policy agendas in developing countries (Food & Water Watch, 2012)

RESOURCES

On private sector funding and philanthropy

Adelman, C. (2009) 'Global philanthropy and remittances: reinventing foreign aid', Brown Journal of World Affairs, Vol 15, Issue 2.
Access online

Contemporary private giving takes an astounding number of forms, from small NGOs working in remote villages in Africa, to state-of-the-art online charitable giving sites, to nonprofit venture philanthropy firms. The authors argue that in order to help people in sustainable ways, foreign aid must find a new business model. The new paradigm should be grounded in what William Easterly calls an "opportunistic innovation" model that looks for targets of opportunity, not rigid, long-range goals set by donor agencies. Decentralized and more flexible, private aid responds to the enormous initiative and entrepreneurship in the large and growing civil societies of developing countries. Moreover, the paper argues that successful private philanthropic projects and public-private partnerships work because they respond to local initiatives, require co-financing as a measure of commitment, involve peer-to-peer relationships through professional associations and volunteers, and build local institutions. With a focus on local ownership, accountability, and flexibility, privately-funded programs are more likely to have lasting results.

Edwards, M. (2011) 'The role and limitations of philanthropy'. The Bellagio Initiative paper: IDS/Resource Alliance/Rockefeller Foundation
Access online

The paper distinguishes between two philosophies of change. The first focuses on building the capabilities of others to address problems in ways that suit them best, even if this requires a long and circuitous journey over time. The second concentrates on solving a subset of the most acute or important problems in specific ways, ideally with spillover effects on the forces that influence long-term change. Both approaches are important, but they are suitable for tackling different elements of wellbeing in different ways. Too often, this debate is framed in a way that polarizes the 'old' as 'dated' and the 'new' as necessarily 'more effective', leading to impassioned but fruitless attempts to prove that one is 'better' than the other outside of a particular set of goals, circumstances and evaluative criteria which are themselves contested. The author argues that this is a serious mistake which displaces attention away from strategies that we should recognize that these are complementary avenues for deploying the unique advantages of foundations. By combining elements from both approaches it should be possible to construct an 'ecosystem' of funding styles that matches the needs of the issues and communities at hand. The paper concludes that the two priorities for the future of philanthropy are to preserve and enhance the diversity of funding options from foundations in order to ensure that every aspect of wellbeing is attended to; and strengthen their accountability.

Sanborn, C. and Portocarrero, F. (2003) 'Philanthropy in Latin America: donor foundations challenges in building human capital and social justice'. Lima: CIUP.
Access online (In Spanish)

The authors highlight some characteristics of philanthropy in Latin America: the persistence of assistentialism and religious charity; growing interest of some sectors of the economic elite in seeking lasting solutions to hunger, poverty and violence; dispersion, fragmentation and

limitation of the impact and capacity to achieve the objectives; 'endogenization' of some philanthropic practices. The paper also argues that philanthropic efforts aimed at closing social gaps should: seek partnerships in which governments participate as active and legitimate partners; achieve greater coherence and effectiveness in the efforts of the higher-resources and economic power in solving social problems; extend and deepen partnerships and exchange of experiences with counterparts from different societies to improve governance, transparency and social impact of their activities.

Sandulli, F. (2008) 'Strategies of Global Corporate Philanthropy: The case of Spanish Firms in Latin America'. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
Access online
(In Spanish)

Why do multinational companies decide to internationalize their social action? The paper analyzes that decision through a sample of Spanish multinationals present in Latin America. The author concludes that this decision has to do with the learning dynamic characteristic of the process of internationalization of firms, so that firms with greater international exposure are more likely to undertake social action programs at the international level. Furthermore, the study shows that global companies with strong global corporate reputation tend to follow a unified social action strategy, while other companies often choose local social action strategies.

Sierra, K. (2012) 'The Green Climate Fund's Private Sector Facility: the case for private sector participation on the Board', Brookings Institution.
Access online

Governance practices in the management of public, pooled funds have been evolving. Increasingly, civil society and the private sector are being asked to serve on governing boards in decision-making capacities. This paper discusses the case for private sector engagement in the Green Climate Fund's Private Sector Facility's governance in light of emerging practice in board governance for public funds in a variety of settings. The general idea is that an organization can enhance the likelihood of achieving its goals of scale-up, transformation and leverage by including individual voting members who bring private sector skills and experience in its board. The paper includes a number of risks, including conflicts of interest, selection by constituency versus by skills and experience, distortions of the public good, lack of knowledge of developing country conditions and opportunities, low value-added from private sector engagement, and lack of trust. Finally, the paper makes some recommendations for institutions seeking to involve private sector in their boards, suggesting that involving private sector members in their boards could be appealing to for research organizations.

Ogden. T. (2011) 'Living with the Gates Foundation. How much difference is it making?', *Alliance* **magazine, November 28th 2011.**
Access online

Which is the influence of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in pursuing the philanthropic agenda? Can a foundation as large as Gates change government policy or influence enough giving to really change things? Can even Bill Gates change the way the wealthy give and engage in philanthropy? The article sets that the foundation's spending power has an inexorable impact on any field in which it chooses to invest in a number of ways. First, it attracts researchers to its interests (and away from competing interests) by making funds

relatively easily available. Second, the foundation's spending on advocacy and media affect even what is discussed in its areas of interest. Moreover, the article highlights one of the strengths of the foundation: that it was able to find a focus, but keeping the attributes of flexibility, adaptability and learning, which are all praiseworthy in philanthropy.

On private sector funding and philanthropy in research

Callahan, D. (1999) 'The Think Tank As Flack. How Microsoft and other corporations use conservative policy groups'. The Washington Monthly online.
Access online

Three mighty rivers of private money help shape American politics. The first, and most familiar, is direct campaign contributions to political candidates and parties. The second goes to underwrite a vast lobbying apparatus in Washington and state capitals. The third river is less well-known: it is the money which underwrites a vast network of public policy think tanks and advocacy groups. For public policy organizations on the left and the center, this source of money remains dominant, with some funds also coming from unions. However, the big development of the 1990s is that conservative institutes have had spectacular new success in tapping business money to fund ideologically charged policy research. The author argues that hard-edged corporate don't give away money for nothing, they expect a return on their investment: corporate giving to right-wing groups has steadily increased as private sector leaders have seen the effectiveness with which conservative think tanks, and their armies of credentialed "experts," advance business interests in the political arena, help to buy respect for the self-interested positions of private companies, and help to push ideas into the mainstream of political debate. Finally, the paper highlights the fact that all corporate contributions to nonprofits have the advantage of being tax-deductible.

James, J. (2011) 'Academic-business relationships built on quality research and strong relationships can boast illustrated impact and great results for both sides', Blog Impact of Social Sciences: maximizing the impacts of academic research, London School of Economics and Political Science.
Access online

Why should a company enter into academic partnerships? And what makes a good academic-business partnership? Based on Hewlett-Packard's experience, the author gives three main reasons why a company might enter into an academic partnership: to enhance capability, enable collaboration and add credibility to its work. So what makes a good academic-business partnership? Firstly, it must be based on quality research and teaching. Second, the best partnerships grow bottom up, based on strong personal relationships. Third, a good partnership should allow both partners to achieve some form of market differentiation. Finally, strongest partnerships are those that embrace academic independence, even where this leads to research findings that could be regarded as 'inconvenient' to the business.

Nachiappan, K. (2011) 'Philanthropic Foundations, Think Tanks, and Development: Understanding and Assessing the Think Tank Initiative'. Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, November 21st 2011.
Access online

According to the author, today there are two broad philanthropic approaches to effecting change in developing countries. The first approach focuses on developing and augmenting the

core capacities of citizens, empowering them to eventually function as progressive agents of change within their own societies. Development initiatives under this rubric emphasize local participation, ownership, partnership, collaboration, and capacity building. The second method endeavors to direct immediate resources to tackle and ultimately resolve problems that languish due to pervasive deficits in governance, finance, and capacity. The TTI exemplifies an emergent development paradigm—where partnership and collaboration are underscored, knowledge is recognized as a growth lever, and local agency and empowerment are deemed critical to advance and sustain growth trajectories. And philanthropy, given its penchant towards innovation and experimentation, appears poised to function as the predominant driver of this epistemic shift.

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Mendizabal, E., 2012, 'Independence, dependency, autonomy… is it all about the money?'. Onthinktanks blogpost, June 1st 2011.
Access online

What do we really mean by independence when talking about think tanks? The authors sets that the idea of independence as non-affiliation is damaging for think tanks in developing countries. It leads them to think that the only way of achieving it is to 'let the research speak for itself' avoid any close relationships with political or economic powers, and this can, in some cases, stop them from exploring new ways of fulfilling their missions. After exploring some actions that think tanks can carry out when seeking their independence, the article concludes that independence comes from the power of the organization (and its members) to choose their own path. But it can never be total, there is only relative independence. And finding the right balance has to be one of the most difficult things a think tank needs to achieve.

Kremer, M., (2005) 'Encouraging private sector research for tropical agriculture'. Cambridge, M.A: Harvard University.
Access online

Private research in agriculture is particularly concentrated in rich countries. This is a result of significant failures in the market for research and development (R&D), in particular, the difficulty of preventing the resale of seed in developing countries. How can governments encourage private R&D in tropical agriculture? The paper argues that traditional funding of research may be usefully supplemented by a commitment to reward developers of specific new agricultural technologies. Rewards tied to adoption may be especially useful in increasing up-take. An illustration of how a commitment to reward developers of new agricultural technologies might work is provided.

Broadbent, E., (2012) 'Research-based evidence in African policy debates. Case study 3 The contemporary debate on genetically modified organisms in Zambia', EBPDN case study. London: EBPDN/Mwananchi.
Access online

This case study considers contemporary discussions surrounding Zambia's acceptance of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The characteristic of the debate is that evidence on respective sides, supporters and opponents of GMOs, is thought to be selective, used with the intention of supporting a position formed prior to any review of existing evidence. The debate lends itself to the selection and dismissal of evidence on the grounds that it is either invalid or not part of the relevant 'discourse'. While – and probably because – this national debate

showcases a great use of evidence, there is considerable scope to suggest that evidence selection is based on economic interests.

Food & Water Watch (2012) 'Public research, private gain: corporate influence over university agricultural research'. Washington D.C: Food & Water Watch.
Access online

What happen whens funding comes from private and corporate donations? The report provides a history of the land-grant university system including how, as public funding has stalled in recent decades, these universities have turned to agribusiness to fill the void, compromising the public mission of the institutions. The report outlines the millions of dollars that land-grant universities and professors have received from corporate funders and gives examples of the unencumbered access and influence corporations have received in return. To conclude, the report make several recommendations for ways public agricultural research should be reoriented to serve the common good, including a call for more transparency and directing research funding toward more practical solutions to the day-to-day problems facing farmers.

Lowe, P., (2012) 'Public research for private interests'. *Harvest*, **December 10th 2012.**
Access online

What is the "funder effect"? Based on different studies, the article argues that agricultural universities in the top five beef-producing states in the U.S. have become quasi-arms of the cattle industry, focused on work for the big corporations and commodity groups that make up the industrialized beef industry. Created to do research, teaching and service for the common people who first populated the prairie states, the colleges have become de facto research and development labs for big business, offering naming rights for buildings and professorships. But for many universities, these public-private collaborations are the only way to combat the dwindling public funds while keeping research intact: researches that would benefit small operators, organic farmers or sustainable agriculture are "orphan issues".

2. RESEARCH WITHIN THE POLICY PROCESS

In this section:

- The political economy of research uptake
- The role of narratives & ideas in policy arguments
- Evidence-informed/evidence-based policy and influence
- Research functions/roles in different policy contexts

2.1. THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RESEARCH UPTAKE

As the discussion in Section 1 demonstrated, the relationship between research and policy is not free from the complexities of financial incentives and funding relationships. However the question of the 'political economy' of research uptake is not only an economic discussion; it also encompasses (inter-related) issues relating to culture, social norms, and beliefs. While these are arguably not always readily separated from economic concerns, such a reductionist view can lead to analysis which lacks depth (Broadbent, 2012).

This literature in this section delves further into the 'politics' of how research is produced, used, and understood in policy. Principally, three pertinent issues are reflected:

- The 'politics' of the evidence-based policy agenda
- Different types of 'knowledge'/evidence
- Power relations in policy decisions and their effects

The foundations upon which the promotion of 'evidence-based policy' (now sometimes referred to as 'evidence-informed policy') is based have always been subject to some debate, particularly in regard to the seeming trumping of 'western' rational, scientific knowledge over knowledge generated, understood, and used in developing country policy contexts. The normative assumptions which underlie the desire to ensure policy is based on 'evidence' are not, of course, only operational in donor approaches to recipient government policy; 'evidence-based policy' is a mantra which percolates policy discussion in donor countries, too.

Stone (2001) draws attention to the difficulty of isolating what 'policy' is, arguing that the varied interpretations of policy lead to quite different perspectives on how to support research-policy relations; while Broadbent (2012) critically assesses the evidence-based policy agenda's assumptions, suggesting that –ironically– the idea currently lacks a rigorous evidence base itself. Further, it is argued that initiatives to enhance the role of research in policy ignore the very real incentives that exist within developing country policy environments *not* to use research (Igwe, 2012). The most recent and vehement critique comes from du Toit (2012) whose eloquent discussion on how the evidence-based policy agenda's assumptions present a misleading understanding of the policy process as rational and linear. Based on the South African experience, du Toit examines how the very different meanings placed upon evidence make it very difficult to hold a unified discussion on evidence-based policy.

Multiple meanings, interpretations and perspectives arguably lie at the heart of the discussion on the politics of research in the policy process, taking the issue out of the purely economic realm. As Broadbent (2012) shows, policy debates in Africa involve a number of different (though unreflected-upon) 'types' of evidence or knowledge which can constrain the dynamics of research use. This is not to say that different types of evidence or knowledge are unwelcome: although the value of 'indigenous' knowledge has been questioned (Newman, 2011), these perspectives remain controversial.

In general the literature is agreed that the policy process benefits from knowledge acquired not only from 'scientific' means, and that 'citizen' and 'practical' knowledge gained from experience are vital to informing the decision-making process (Jones et al, 2009), as well as being empowering for citizens who are able to contribute to the evidence collecting process by drawing upon their own experience (Shahvali, 2011). Understanding how evidence is constructed and understood in developing country contexts is therefore critical to the process of trying to understand the role of 'evidence' in policy (Powell, 2006; Broadbent, 2012).

Apart from the social and cultural aspects of how understandings of evidence affect the relationship between research and policy, it is clear that political considerations weigh heavily upon policymakers in their use of research when making decisions. Policymaking is fundamentally a political endeavour which is better understood as being framed not by the

question 'what works best?' but 'what works best *for me*?' While this is not a problem specific only to developing countries, it is argued that it is in such contexts that evidence-based policy is sorely needed.

The political dynamics underlying the research-policy nexus will inevitably vary by country, sector, and the specific conditions of the time. Broadbent (2012) and Nash et al (2006) both present approaches to assessing this political context, which will include considerations such as the origin of think tanks (Kimenyi and Datta, 2011) and the formation of universities (Zeleza, 2002), and human resources (Mansell, 2010). Further, as the RAPID Framework shows, the external influences also play a prominent role in this heady political mix, and are increasingly becoming more politically engaged in terms of their strategies (Jones, 2011).

Overall, it is possible to conclude that there is an undoubtable trend towards further work in this area, including increasing reflexivity on 'evidence-based policy', the power relations which sustain the assumptions underlying its promotion, and different understandings of evidence and the dynamics which determine the value places on different types of evidence. On a wider note, there is growing recognition that the 'politics' of research production, dissemination, and use is a cross-cutting issue that lies at the heart of all research-to-policy issues, both theoretical and practical and therefore the analysis of political context is central to research and policy endeavours.

RESOURCES

Politics of evidence-based policy

Broadbent, E. (2012). 'The Politics of Research-Based Evidence in African Policy Debates: Synthesis of case study findings'. London: EBPDN/Mwananchi
Access online

This article is a presentation of the findings of the research project 'The Politics of Research Uptake', and looks at the relationship between research and policy by focusing on the role of research – based evidence in African policy debates. Four policy cases are analyzed, in which policy debates are understood as an integral part of the policymaking process. The mainstay of the paper is that research use has a political nature and political context is key to understand the role of research – based evidence policy in Africa. It offers a three pronged framework that links the framing role of discourse and dominant cognitive understandings of what constitutes knowledge with agency – related factors to explain the role of research based knowledge in policy debates. The author also considers what is meant by 'evidence-based policy' and presents a critique of the un-examined nature of the concept.

Stone, D. (2002) 'Using Knowledge: the dilemmas of 'Bridging Research and Policy''. *Compare*, **Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 285-296.**
Access online

This paper focuses on the use of policy research in the social sciences, an aspect of development discourse, and the dilemmas that have been met by development agencies and researchers in communicating and using that research. It suggests that varying

interpretations of policy – making provide different parameters of understanding of the research – policy nexus: different policy environments, institutional structures and political arrangements produce different sets of opportunities and constraints for dialogue, varying strategies for researchers and diverse implications from one political system to the next. Twelve perspectives are offered on improving research and policy linkages, which are categorised into three broad categories, supply – side, demand - led and policy currents.

Du Toit, A. (2012) 'Making sense of evidence: Notes on the Discursive Politics of Research and Pro-Poor Policy Making'. PLAAS Working Paper 21. Cape Town: PLAAS.
Access online

Evidence – based policy offers poor guidance to those who want to ensure that social policy is informed by social sciences research, because it relies on a technocratic, linear understanding of the policy making process and is based on a naïve empiricist comprehension of the role of evidence. This leaves aside the role of underlying discursive frameworks and paradigms that give meaning to evidence. Politically loaded and ideologically compelling policy narratives that contest rival policy frameworks need to be taken into consideration in order to understand how evidence is used.

Types of knowledge

Shahvali, M. (2011) 'Enriching indigenous knowledge: an alternative paradigm for empowerment' *Knowledge Management for Development Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 194-205.
Access online

The concept of indigenous knowledge (IK) has gone through a development cycle, in which it was first considered useful and now seems to be considered less useful. How can the concept of IK be prevented from going through the same cycle of critique and rejection as concepts such as "sustainable development", "community – based conservation" and "participatory development"? IK is essential for the eradication of poverty and the localization of development, which is why academics should enrich the quality of IK with theories and methods to empower local individuals and communities through a series of questions.

Igwe, L. (2011) 'Critical Thinking and the African Identity'. Africa Unchained Blogpost, 25 November.
Available online

Igwe criticizes the belief he perceives to be held among his African peers that critical reasoning is part of a white, western mentality. He points out that nobody has ever offered a definition of the "African" way of thinking, and laments the fact that beliefs informed by superstition and primordial thinking is glorified in this continent. "Western" reasoning might be considered as unacceptable, but it is still considered reasonable and sometimes even superior.

Powell, M. (2006) 'Which Knowledge? Whose Reality? An Overview of Knowledge Used in the Development Sector'. *Development in Practice* , Vol. 1, No.6, pp. 518–32.
Access online

This article explores the various definitions of knowledge that exist in a world of many cultures and intellectual traditions, as well as the role of language. It looks at their relationship with each other, and with the many and varied 'informational developments' – information – related changes in work, culture, organizations and technology around the world. Most current practice consistently acts against the type of relationship and type of communication that is essential if development policy and practice is to be something other than an imposition of external ideas. These issues pose a series of fundamental challenges to the development sector. It also considers where development organizations get their information and knowledge from and identifies problems with many of the channels used.

Jones, N., Datta, A. and Jones, H. (2009) 'Knowledge, Policy and Power: Six Dimensions of the Knowledge–Policy Interface'. London: ODI.
Access online

This paper explores six key areas of the knowledge – policy interface in order to provide a summary of insights on the linkages between knowledge and development policy. The knowledge – policy interface is too complex to encapsulate in a single framework, which is why it's critical that those seeking to engage in evidence – informed development policy dialogues also use additional tools and frameworks take into account different types of knowledge, such as citizen-based and practical knowledge. This synthesis has the objective of stimulating more nuanced debates and developing tailored tools for actors involved in knowledge translation processes.

Newman, K. (2011) 'Should We Use Indigenous Knowledge […] Even If It's Wrong?' Research to Action blog post, 30 November 2011.
Access online

Even though recently there has been a surge of interest among international development circles in protecting and using indigenous knowledge, the author disagrees with the notion that indigenous knowledge is as valid as research – based evidence when it comes to deciding what works, and therefore what policies to make. The problem lies in the fact that there are many examples of populations which have shared knowledge about what works when it is in fact wrong. Indigenous knowledge is not a reliable source of evidence.

Politics of knowledge and decision making

World Bank/Oxford Policy Management (2008) 'The Political Economy of Policy Reform: Issues and Implications for Policy Dialogue and Development Operations'. Washington D.C: Social Development Department, World Bank.
Access online

In the past few years there has been a move from the rigid policy conditionalities associated with the structural reforms era and towards a new development approach that emphasises the need for reform processes to be underpinned by a sufficient level of commitment within the country concerned to be sustainable over the long term. This paper presents two case studies in order to understand the significance of power relations within the economic policy sector, vested interests, and the links to national political processes, all of which can be critical to being an effective actor in policy dialogue. Its objectives are to analyze the political

economy of reform by looking at stakeholder interests, incentives, institutions, risks, opportunities and processes from a social analysis perspective; and to illustrate what works, why and how for a better understanding of political economy issues in the design and implementation of reforms and development operations.

Jones, H. (2011) 'Donor Engagement in Policy Dialogue: Navigating the Interface between Knowledge and Power'. Thinkpiece for AusAID. London: ODI.
Access online

Public policy in developing countries is a complex matter that involves a diverse collection of players, a large range of moving parts, and long – evolved spoken and unspoken cultural and political norms. This is why many aid agencies and international development organizations are increasingly engaging in policy dialogue in these countries, in order to recognize the role of power, and the multiple ways in which understanding and action are linked and interact with each other. This paper also offers tools with which to deal with these issues.

Mwangi S. Kimenyi and Ajoy Datta (2011). Think tanks in sub-Saharan Africa: How the political landscape has influenced their origins. London: ODI.
Access online

Two key factors help explain think tanks' origin in Africa: the concentration of power across nation states and the role of external influence. Concentration of power factors include French and British research institutes during the colonial era, set up to help them govern; 'big man' politics after independence which reduced the political space for academics; and military governments that further reduced civic input into policy – making and brain drain. External influence factors are the heavy reliance after independence on foreign academics and intellectuals; and structural adjustment in line with Western inspired policies in the 80s and 90s, which resulted in research being transferred to non-state actors. The study also raises questions relating to how the political context has played a role in agenda – setting, and the impact of racial, ethnic or religious cleavages on research production.

Zeleza, Paul Tiyambe(2002) 'The Politics of Historical and Social Science Research in Africa'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 9- 23.
Access online

This paper argues that in most African countries, the development of universities and research has been mainly tied to the vagaries of state policies and politics, the shifting missions and mandates of international donor agencies, and the unpredictable demands and dislocations of civil societies. Also important factors are the internal challenges, the cultures of universities themselves, their goals and governance, management of resources and infrastructures, their capacities to pursue intellectual excellence and equity, political autonomy and public accountability, local relevance and international recognition. African social scientists have been caught in the difficulty of addressing African realities in other languages and paradigms, conversing with each other through publications and media controlled by foreign academic communities.

Mansell, R. (2010). 'Power and Interests in Developing Knowledge Societies: Exogenous and Endogenous Discourses in Contention'. IKM Working Paper No. 11. Bonn: European Association of Development Research.
Access online

This paper presents two models for development, the exogenous model and the endogenous models, and argues that the former has been the predominant paradigm so far and has underpinned many of the interventions by the international development community aimed at employing ICTs to meet poverty reduction goals. Meanwhile, the endogenous model focuses more directly on human beings and their resources and aspirations. The overshadowing of the endogenous model by the exogenous one has serious social, cultural and economic consequences because the exogenous model cloaks the interests of investors in the global "North" whose principal ambition is profits from the sale of digital technologies and the content that is hosted or circulated through them.

Nash, N., Hudson, A., and Luttrell, C. (2006) 'Mapping Political Context: A Toolkit for Civil Society Organizations'. RAPID Toolkit. London: ODI.
Access online

Policy is the result of interactions among different organizations about what course of action should be taken – the sum of these interactions constitutes the policy process, which is in turn shaped by political context. This toolkit lays out a range of tools that civil society organizations (CSOs) can use to understand and map political context in order to engage more effectively in policy processes. Some of these use the nation – state as the unit of analysis; others focus on the mapping of power, or the mapping of institutions, organizations and stakeholders, and formal and informal institutions. Each tool is first described, then a brief outline is provided of how the tool works, and finally an attempt is made to identify those elements of the tool that might be of particular interest to CSOs.

2.2 THE ROLE OF NARRATIVES & IDEAS IN POLICY ARGUMENTS

There is a growing concern with how power is constituted through soft skills such as persuasion and rhetoric (Klein, 2001). Indeed, while 'discursive' approaches to understanding the relationship between knowledge and power in development processes have yet to be adequately applied (Jones, 2009), the role of research in producing indirect influences over general ideas, concepts, and discourses within the public policy realm has been emphasized by Weiss (1978) (see Section 2). Further, in considering what makes research influential, discussions on the role of research in policy have emphasized the need to make research findings fit into a dominant 'narrative' or story which is compelling to policymakers and the general public (see Section 2. on Policy Influence); and in addition to this, the literature has also highlighted the importance of engaging with the media to ensure research is disseminated widely and is thought to be an important part of the public agenda is also a crux issue in the area of research communications (see Section 2. on the role of the media). However, while ensuring that research findings cohere with policy narratives in order to maximize is advisable according to the literature, what does this mean for the quality of research presented and the ability of users of research to develop expertise in a particular area?

A narrative in the field of international development is understood as a mechanism to establish causal relationships between two negative aspects of a particular problem, drawing upon common sense and commonly-accepted beliefs and assumptions which reinforce widely-shared values. These narratives, argues Molle (2008), are often self-validating because they tend to 'produce' evidence rather than vice-versa, manifesting themselves through "success stories", "best practices", "bright spots", or "promising technologies". Policy narratives are popular with policymakers for they eradicate complexity and, as Hass (1989) argues in his seminal work on the role of epistemic communities in policy discussions, policy narratives act as 'uncertainty reducers', placing a seeming order on what are complicated policy problems.

Yet there are serious concerns that the prominence of narratives to understand complex policy problems both crowds out minority voices who do not present arguments that fit neatly within existing frameworks; as well as fears that the concern for research findings being kept 'simple' will lead to what Enrique Mendizabal has called 'dumbing down the audience' (2010). Writing about their experiences in community research findings to DFID advisors, both Booth (2011) and Cleaver & Franks (2008) demonstrate that there is little demand for the 'full picture'. Reflecting on his research program's difficulty in finding a willing set of ears when presenting findings that were contrary to the 'received wisdom' regarding the efficacy of demand-led service delivery, Booth criticizes the development community's insatiable appetite for "certain simple messages" over complex (and uncertainty-generating) research findings.

A number of further case studies support this literature, building what is a growing critique and evidence base regarding the potential downfalls of placing too much emphasis on the communication of bite-size research at the expense of building the capacity of research users to understand the complexities of policy problems (de Grassi, 2007; Stevens, 2011; Broadbent, 2012).

RESOURCES

Knowledge and power

Klein, G. (2001) *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*. Cambridge: The MIT Press. (Book)

In this book, Klein sets forth an understanding of the policy process as an intuitive rather than linear process, with decisions being based on four 'sources of power': intuition; mental stimulation; metaphor; and storytelling. Instead of relying on manuals and toolkits, the MIT researchers argue, decision-making is strengthened by focussing on these four sources of power. These are based on the 'soft' skills it is not possible to train a computer to enact, including confidence and imagination. The role of metaphor and storytelling here is paramount, offering wisdom, drama, and empathy. The author implies that storytelling is instructive and enlightening rather than obstructive; and highlights that researchers need good creative writing skills in order to draw from their real-life experiences rather than following toolkits.

Jones, H. (2009). 'Policy-making as discourse: a review of recent knowledge-to-policy literature'. ODI-IKM Working Paper No. 5. Bonn: European Association of Development Research.
Access online

This paper takes a wider view of research and policy linkages and considers 'knowledge' in the policy process. The paper covers much of the usual research-to-policy literature, but also addresses the generation and use of knowledge by political actors, looking at how knowledge is infused with power and is expressed in various ways. These include: cognitive paradigms, normative frameworks, frames, categories, policy narratives, and programmatic models and ideas. The focus on discourse provides a compelling window on understanding the interplay of knowledge and power in policy processes, in particular how they vary in different country contexts. For instance, efforts to understand the way in which policy discourse is understood and expressed in the South have highlighted the African concept of *Ubuntu*, which sees knowledge and communal ways of life as intimately linked.

Reducing complexity

Haas, P.M. (1992) 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination'. *International Organization.* Vol. 46, No.1, pp. 1–35.
Access online

This paper examines the role of 'epistemic communities' - networks of knowledge-based experts – in articulating cause-and-effect relationships to policymakers involved in complex decision-making processes. The paper assumes that policymakers are 'uncertainty reducers', with knowledge networks functioning to explain uncertainty through models of social and physical processes; and the influence such epistemic communities wield over policy decisions and the process of arriving at them is significant.

Molle, F. (2008) "Nirvana concepts, narratives and policy models: insights from the water sector", *Water Alternatives*, *Vol.*1, No. 1, pp. 131–156.
Access online

This paper draws upon existing literature on policy narratives to furnish the author's own experience in the water sector. It proposes a tentative on how the development and management of water resources is influenced by narratives and ideas that manifest themselves through "success stories", "best practices", "bright spots", or "promising technologies". Molle identifies three different types of concepts that shape policy and decision making in the contemporary water sector: *nirvana concepts* - these underpin overarching frameworks that promote or strengthen particular *narratives* or *storylines* (simple, causal, and explanatory beliefs) and legitimize specific blueprints or *models* of both policies and development interventions. Nirvana concepts, narratives and models are ideological objects which function to offer a "solution". This paper argues that these influential concepts are not neutral or scientific; they do not emerge by chance but, rather, are the result of complex webs of interests, ideologies, and power. In return, they also shape the ways things are framed; options are favored, disregarded or ignored; and particular social groups are empowered or sidelined.

Dumbing down the audience?

Cleaver, F. and Franks, T. (2008) 'Distilling or Diluting? Negotiating the Water Research–Policy Interface'. *Water Alternatives* 1(1): 157–76.
Access online

Based on their experiences of working with policymakers in the water sector, the authors critique instrumental approaches to the generation of knowledge and policy based on the amalgamation of perceived 'success stories' and 'good practice'. Instead they favour approaches that attempt to understand water governance arrangements and outcomes for the poor within wider frameworks of negotiations over the allocation of societal resources. It is argued that current approaches to research and policy view the problem merely as one of 'translation', despite the existence of fundamentally different ideas relating to the nature and respective roles of research and policy. The paper draws particular attention to the difficulties in reconciling the role of social science researchers as *uncertainty creators* (unsettling established categories, questioning conventional wisdoms) and the imperative for policy makers to be *uncertainty reducers*. The authors reflect upon their experiences of having to 'dilute' research messages in order to fit narrow policy frameworks and understandings, thereby simplifying complex processes and arguments.

Mendizabal, E. (2010) 'Dumbing down the Audience'. ODI Blogpost, July 6 2010.
Access online

In this opinion piece Mendizabal argues that researchers should not be satisfied with catering to the demands of policymakers who often prefer to read two-page research briefs rather than engaging in the complexities of issues at hand. Rather, researchers have a responsibility to raise the bar of policymaker's evidence literacy. The article also warns of researchers 'de-skilling' themselves by focusing too much on shorter, 'policy-relevant' work at the expense of innovative, long-term research which challenges paradigms.

Booth, D. (2011) 'Working with the Grain and Swimming Against the Tide: Barriers to Uptake of Research Findings on Governance and Public Services in Low-Income Africa'. APPP Working Paper 18. London: ODI.
Access online

In this paper Booth reflects upon his experience with the African Power and Politics Programme in trying to communicate research findings that go "against the tide" in terms of dominant policy narratives on the role of civil society in demanding better service provision in Africa. Contrary to the widely-accepted and popular narrative of 'bottom-up' and 'demand-led' service delivery being successful, the program's research findings indicate the opposite. However, Booth argues that communicating this message has been difficult due to the over-selling of "certain simple messages" which do not reflect the complexities of the issue. Speaking more widely the paper argues that: "More fundamentally, incentives, ideologies and vested interests stand between research and the adoption of its findings into operational development thinking. This aspect of the problem of research 'uptake' needs to be taken more seriously by all concerned."

Case studies

Aaron deGrassi (2007) 'Linking Research And Policy: The Case Of Ghana's Rice Trade Policy'. GSSP Background Paper 10. Accra/Washington D.C: IFPRI.
Access online

This paper reviews the role of knowledge in the formation of rice trade policy in Ghana, finding that there are three principal discourses shaping the way in which policy is understood: youth; populism; and modernization. The author traces the ways in which these discourses shape the relationship between research and policy, finding that they do not inherently inhibit research-policy links, and indeed might be 'reframed' to promote them. However, these discourses also shape and are shaped in various ways by several important political dynamics that influence connections between research and policy.

Stevens, A (2011). 'Telling policy stories: an ethnographic study of the use of evidence in policy-making in the UK'. *Journal of Social Policy*. **Volume 40, Issue 02, pp. 237- 255.**
Access online

This article examines the use that is made of evidence in making policy amongst a group of UK civil servants. It shows that while civil servants displayed a high level of commitment to the use of evidence, their use of evidence was hampered by the availability of various kinds of evidence and by the unsuitability of much academic research in answering policy questions. In response to this, the civil servants used evidence to create persuasive policy stories that aided their various agendas, both in making acceptable policies and in advancing careers. They often involved the excision of methodological uncertainty and the use of 'killer charts' to boost the persuasiveness of the narrative. In telling these stories, policies which were 'totemically' strong were favoured over those that lacked a compelling narrative. Stevens concludes that a selective, narrative use of evidence is ideological, and in this case was used to support systematically asymmetrical relations of power.

Broadbent, E. (2012). Research-based evidence in African policy debates: Case Study 4 – Chieftaincy Reform in Sierra Leone. Evidence-based Policy in Development Network Case Study 4. London: EBPDN/Mwananchi.
Access online

This case study examines arguments made in the debate over the reform of the chieftaincy in Sierra Leone. A contentious and politicized debate involving multiple interests and dovetailing with more general debates about the country's history and future trajectory, this paper argues that the debate is dominated by international development discourses which are not always well-understood by those propagating them. The paper draws attention to the role of the international community in diffusing policy narratives and ideas, and argues that concepts such as 'good governance' are not always helpful in promoting evidence-based arguments in policy discussions.

2.3. EVIDENCE-INFORMED/EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY AND INFLUENCE

While there is significant discussion on how to increase the influence of research on policy; and the research-to-policy literature clearly assumes that research should influence policy, and that decision-making processes in developing countries should be more influenced by evidence than they are presently, what is actually meant by policy influence?

Like notions of 'policy', 'evidence', or 'knowledge' there is no straightforward answer. Policy influence is understood in a number of ways, with there being different types of mutually-inclusive ways in which policy can be said to have been 'influenced' (see Section 3.1 on the Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy Influence).

THE CONFLATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY AND POLICY INFLUENCE

Recent commentaries have been at pains to point out what policy influence is *not*. Broadbent (2012) and Newman (2012) both argue that policy influence is often conflated with evidence-based policy in the research and policy literature and practical support offered to civil society organizations in developing countries. Newman states that there is no inevitable link between the presence research-based evidence the policymakers' awareness of it and policy influence. Further, just because research has had some influence in the policymaking process (variously conceived) this does not mean that the policy is 'evidence-informed' *per se*. In a similar vein, Broadbent warns against supporting researchers and research organizations to promote 'my' research at the expense of focussing on supporting the developing of a more general enabling environment for evidence-based discussion rather than, as Weiss (2001) notes, supporting the movement of policy research into the territory of advocacy. These commentaries emphasise the need to clarify objectives when it comes to supporting research-based evidence and supporting policy influence.

HOW POLICY CHANGES

Alongside these critiques, the literature offers rich understandings of what policy influence is. The first issue to grapple with is the question of *how policy changes*, which is addressed in the literature by Kingdon (1995), Stachowiak (2009), Keeley (2001), and Ordóñez et al (2012). Policy change is understood to occur in a number of ways, including:

- "Large Leaps" or Punctuated Equilibrium Theory, in which significant seismic changes in policy and institutions can occur when the right conditions are in place;
- "Coalition" Theory or Advocacy Coalition Framework, which views policy change as occurring through coordinated activity among a range of individuals with the same core policy beliefs;
- "Policy Windows" or Agenda Setting, in which policy can be changed during a window of opportunity when advocates successfully connect the way a problem is defined with the policy solution to the problem or the political climate surrounding their issue. Thus, approach also understands agenda setting as being fed by three 'streams' – the recognition of a problem; policy solutions to the problem; and the political environment which frames both the problem and the policy (Kingdon, 1995).
- Messaging and Frameworks Theory, in which individuals' policy preferences or willingness to accept them will depending on how options are framed or presented;
- "Power Politics" or Power Elites Theory, in which policy is understood as the result of power-holders and thus change as a result of working directly with power holders, often incrementally and from 'the inside' with strategic allies;
- "Grassroots" or Community Organizing Theory, which views policy change as the result of collective action by members of the community who work on changing problems affecting their lives.

The literature is agreed that when planning to influence policy it is essential to understand that policy is non-linear and hard to predict, therefore responsiveness is a required skill; and that is essential to match your influencing strategy with both your means and the objectives you want to achieve, meaning that different strategies based on different theories of change might be employed at different times. Further, Ordóñez et al (2012) argue that influence cannot always be read in terms of researchers marketing their own research, but a dialogue between stakeholders in which leadership and active collaboration are exercised in order to find the best solutions. Continuous learning and the role of evaluation is important here, as Weyrauch and Langou (2011) examine in their work on the role of impact evaluation in influencing policy change.

TYPES OF POLICY CHANGE

Examples of types of policy changes are offered by both the IDRC and ODI. Lindquist (2001) describes ways in which research can influence policy in terms of: Expanding policy capacities, in which research improves knowledge and supports the development of innovative ideas, lines of thought and questions, as well as supporting actors to communicate ideas; ii) Broadening policy horizons, in which research provides opportunities for networking/learning, framing debates with new concepts and stimulating public debate and quiet dialogue between policymakers, and helping researchers to adopt a broader understanding of issues; and iii) Affecting policy regimes through modification of existing policies and programmes or their redesign. Jones (2011) relies on a different typology when explaining how to assess the impact of research on policy, referring to five different types of changes: i) Attitudinal change; ii) Discursive change; iii) Procedural change; iv) Policy content change; and v) Behavioural change.

RESOURCES

Problems with conflating evidence-based policy with policy influence

Kirsty Newman (2012) 'Policy influence versus evidence-informed policy'. Blogpost August 8th 2012.
Access online

In this blogpost Newman argues that evidence-based policy and policy influence are two different things that should not be confused. Finding out that a given piece of research has had impact does not necessarily mean that policy is evidence-informed - it could potentially just mean that those communicating the research have lobbied more effectively than others. If the research was good and the resulting policy change is good for poor people, this can seem like a positive outcome; however the danger is that the policy makers will be equally swayed by the next lobby group who comes along and argues their point effectively.

Broadbent, E. (2012). The Politics of Research Uptake – Synthesis of Case Study Findings. London: . Evidence-Based Policy in Development Network/Mwananchi
Access online

As part of this study's conclusions the author argues that the promotion of evidence-based policy and supporting civil society organizations to influence policy constitute different sets of

activities and should not be conflated, though they can often be integrated. At present, researchers are supported to present 'my' research, which does not necessarily improve how 'evidence-based' the wider policy environment is. A review of focus from individual and organization to systemic and discursive levels would be fruitful.

Weiss, C. (2001) 'Policy research as advocacy: Pro and con.' Knowledge & *Policy***, Vol 4, No.1, 2001, p.37-56.**
Access online

This article considers how policy research influences policy, arguing that it is more influential and persuasive when it resembles advocacy. Thus, policy research moves away from 'traditional' research in which objectivity is of vital operational importance. The author questions what stance researchers should adopt in order to influence policy, asking whether they can influence policy as advocates yet still do justice to the complexities of their knowledge and concluding that there is something 'uncomfortable' about the close relationship between policy research and advocacy that we should be wary of.

How policy changes

Kingdon, J. (1995) *Agendas, Alternative and Public Policies***, 2nd ed. Harper Collins, New York.**
(Book form only)

In this seminal book on policy analysis in the areas of health and transportation, Kingdon uses the notion of evolutionary ideas to explain how policy is formulated. At the crux of the policy process is the 'agenda setting' stage, where a number of ideas or solutions float around in 'the policy primeval soup' until those which survive are coupled with an emerging problem, and at the same time a 'policy window' is opened up by a crisis, political events, or by a policy entrepreneur. Thus, Kingdon uses the metaphor of three 'streams' to demonstrate the processes which contribute to agenda-setting: 1) the problem stream, in which issues are recognized as problems when there is capacity and/or interest in addressing the issue, or interest is stimulated by, for instance, lobbying groups; 2) the policy stream, where interest stimulated by lobbying groups (and similar) is targeted. The policy stream consists of ideas or solutions which have been pushed by governmental actors, experts, and others, and can disappear depending on whether the idea is considered 'good' according to prevailing advice or preference at the time; 3) the politics stream, which consists of the wider political context and which determines the policy and problem stream. The three streams come together in the concept of a 'policy window', which refers to a 'focusing event' (for example an external crisis or due to the skills of a policy entrepreneur) which provides an opportunity for all three streams to coalesce, as long as the proposals which emerge from the stream meet a number of criteria including coherence with societal values, national mood, financial and technical feasibility, and level of political support.

Stachowiak, S. (2009) 'Pathways for Change: 6 Theories about how Policy Change Happens'. Seattle: Organizational Research Service.
Access online

This discussion brief present six understandings of how policy changes (otherwise known as Theories of Change or Logic Models). Different approaches will be suitable at different times due to internal or external 'positioning', capacity, and media interest. The approaches identified are: i)"Large Leaps" or Punctuated Equilibrium Theory, in which significant seismic changes in policy and institutions can occur when the right conditions are in place, often involving large-scale policy change and major advocacy and media campaigns; ii)"Coalition" Theory or Advocacy Coalition Framework, which views policy change as occurring through coordinated activity among a range of individuals with the same core policy beliefs, particularly useful when there is a strong group of allies and a sympathetic administration in place; iii) "Policy Windows" or Agenda Setting, in which policy can be changed during a window of opportunity when advocates successfully connect the way a problem is defined with the policy solution to the problem or the political climate surrounding their issue, particularly useful when readily-mobilized internal capacity exists; iv) Messaging and Frameworks Theory, in which individuals' policy preferences or willingness to accept them will depending on how options are framed or presented, thus drawing attention to how problems are defined and communicated; v)"Power Politics" or Power Elites Theory, in which policy is understood as the result of power-holders and thus change as a result of working directly with power holders, often incrementally and from 'the inside' with strategic allies; v) "Grassroots" or Community Organizing Theory, which views policy change as the result of collective action by members of the community who work on changing problems affecting their lives, in which the advocacy organization can and is willing to play a "convener" or "capacity-builder" role rather than the "driver" role.

Keeley, J. E. (2001) 'Influencing Policy Processes for Sustainable Livelihoods: strategies for change'. Lessons for Change in Policy & Organizations, No. 2. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies
Access online

Based on research in SSA, this booklet considers change within the policy process, suggesting a simple, but multi-faceted, framework for understanding it, as well as tools and ideas for engaging with and influencing policy to promote sustainable livelihoods. At base, the author states that how one engages with policy processes depends on what one wants to achieve, and where an individual or organization is coming from. Given that: i) policy is non-linear and complex; and ii) those wishing to influence policy possess different agendas, this brief offers advice. Key steps to be taken when influencing policy include the need to analyze context, to recognize and use policy narratives, to map actors, and identify policy spaces (i.e. moments for change or 'windows of opportunity').

Ordóñez, A., Bellettini, O., Mendizabal, E., Broadbent, E., and Muller, J. (2012) 'Influence as a Learning Process: Think Tanks And The Challenge Of Improving Policies And Promoting Social Change.' Buenos Aires: GRUPO FARO.
Request document online

This working paper - prepared for the Conference "Think Tank Exchange" organized by the Think Tank Initiative in South Africa – is a synthesis of reflections on twelve stories of policy influence from organizations participating in the Think Tank Initiative (TTI) from Africa, Latin America, and South Asia. The paper makes a number of important observations on the role of think tanks (and their influencing strategies) on policy formation. With a number of varying

roles, including facilitating dialogue, advising policymakers, and advocating for a policy, a review of the different cases shows that organizations play more than one role in the policy influencing process. 'Influence' therefore refers to different aspects of the policy process. The authors conclude that the stories have moved the understanding of policy influence as a tactical and narrow one to a more strategic and holistic one. Rather than viewing influence as an attempt to market 'my' research, this paper concludes that influence is more accurately understood as an exercise of leadership and collaboration with other stakeholders to find solutions and carrying out tasks beyond the production of relevant research.

Types of policy change

Evert A. Lindquist (2001) 'Discerning Policy Influence: Framework for a Strategic Evaluation of IDRC-Supported Research'. Ottawa: IDRC.
Access online

This document was produced to help IDRC assess how the research it supports has influenced policy processes. In terms of how policy influence is understood this paper provides three key approaches: i) Expanding Policy Capacities: Research can have influence by improving knowledge and supporting the development of innovative ideas, lines of thought and questions, as well as supporting actors to communicate ideas; ii) Broadening Policy Horizons: Research can provide opportunities for networking/learning , frame debates with new concepts and stimulating public debate and quiet dialogue between policymakers, and helping researchers to adopt a broader understanding of issues; and iii) Affecting Policy Regimes through modification of existing policies and programs or their redesign.

Jones, H. (2011) 'A guide to monitoring and evaluating policy influence'. ODI Background Note. London: ODI.
Access online

In discussing how to approach monitoring and evaluating policy influencing activities this background note considers both approaches to influencing policy and different types of policy influence. Five types of policy change are identified: i) Attitudinal change - framing debates, changing perceptions, affecting awareness, and getting issues on to the political agenda; ii) Discursive change - discursive commitments from states and other policy actors by affecting language and rhetoric; iii) Procedural change - changes in the process whereby policy decisions are made, such as opening new spaces for policy dialogue; iv) Policy content change; v) Behavioral change. Approaches to influence policy will reflect the types of changes aimed at. One way to categories these approaches is to distinguish between those that take the 'inside track', working closely with decision-makers, versus 'outside track' approaches that seek to influence change through pressure and confrontation. It is also important to distinguish between approaches that are led by evidence and research; and those that involve, primarily, values and interests.

Weyrauch, V., and Díaz Langou, G. (2011) 'Sound expectations: from impact evaluations to policy change'. 3ie, Working Paper 12. New Delhi: Global Development Network.
Access online

This paper outlines a comprehensive and flexible analytical conceptual framework to be used in the production of a case study series. The cases are expected to identify factors that help or hinder rigorous impact evaluations (IEs) from influencing policy and improving policy effectiveness. This framework has been developed to be adaptable to the reality of developing countries. It is aimed as an analytical-methodological tool which should enable researchers in producing case studies which identify factors that affect and explain impact evaluations' policy influence potential. The approach should also enable comparison between cases and regions to draw lessons that are relevant beyond the cases themselves.

For more information on how to monitor and evaluation policy influence, please go to Section 4.

2.4. RESEARCH FUNCTIONS/ROLES IN DIFFERENT POLICY CONTEXTS

What is the function of research in different policy contexts? As the preceding sections have indicated and the literature on this subject argues, the role research can and does play depends on the following key variables:

- The political context
- The research (or communicator of research's) objectives
- The origin of research (including funding and definition of problem statement)
- Financial and human resourcing
- How research is communicated

While the intellectual origins of policy research rests in a quest to arrive at an empirical 'science' of society, politics, and the economy it is fair to say that in practice the functions of research can differ wildly from intent, meaning that the functions or uses of research need to be assessed separately from its aims. This discussion attempts to characterize some of the functions identified in the literature with reference to the above variables.

HOW IS RESEARCH USED?

The literature is unanimous in arguing that the ways in which research functions within policy contexts differs, leading to the development of conceptual frameworks to best understand these functions (Tseng, 2012) (Weiss, 1977). A key insight from which these discussions proceed is that research does not 'speak for itself' and is therefore dependent upon how it is interpreted by users of research. This places a huge responsibility on 'translators' of research (see Section 2.5 on Knowledge Systems). Weiss' typology of research utilization has arguably been one of the most influential contributions to the research-to-policy discussion, and remains a starting point for any consideration of research functions. The five models she identifies are still in currency:

- Knowledge-Driven model – where research feeds directly into the policy process in a linear fashion;
- Problem-solving model – where research fills a gap in knowledge relating to a particular problem and thus leads to a decision being arrived at

- Interactive model – where social scientists are one actor amongst many in a large dialogue, and together with the inputs of others help policymakers arrive at a policy decision;
- Political model – where policymakers appeal to research to justify a pre-determined position (Hope & Walters, 2008);
- Tactical model – where the sponsoring of research is used tactically to justify decisions and delay decisions;
- Enlightenment/conceptual model – the most innovative model proposed, involving the indirect influence of research findings upon general ideas, assumptions, and beliefs. The percolation of research-based ideas is problematic, primarily because it is not directly traced to a particular finding but a general 'sense' of what research on a subject indicates.

Other forms of utilization are described in NCDDR (1996) and Davies & Nutley (2008). In recent years this typology has been added to, notably Tseng (2012) offering an 'imposed' model, where the use of research (or paying lipservice to having used research) is compulsory; and Monaghan's (2011) 'processual' model in which a number of competing groups try to shape the policy agenda, but that this is an open, unequal, and unpredictable competition, though, no inevitability that research will play any role in decision making and instead is subject to the dynamics of political context.

Importantly, the function research plays is highly dependent on the kind of relationship the producer or communicator of research has with policymakers (Weaver, 1989), the overall role a research organization or think tank plays (Chudnovsky et al, 2007), and a research organization or think tank's origins, including its funding arrangements (Braun et al, 2007).

RESOURCES

How is research used?

Tseng, V. (2012) 'The Uses of Research in Policy and Practice'. Social Policy Report, Vol. 26, No.2. Society for Research in Child Development. New York: William T. Grant Foundation.
Access online

This paper presents a conceptual framework for understanding the uses of research in policy and practice, findings from recent empirical work, and early lessons from the field. The framework describes the ways policymakers and practitioners define, acquire, interpret, and ultimately use research. The author identifies a number of ways that policymakers and practitioners use research, including instrumental, conceptual, political, imposed, and process uses. Importantly, the paper argues that because research does not speak for itself, policymakers and practitioners must always interpret its meaning and implications for their particular problems and circumstances, and this in turn influences how research is used. 'Translating' research into policy discussion in an accurate way is therefore critical.

Weiss, C. (1977) 'The Many Meanings of Research Utilization'. *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 39, No. 5, pp. 426-431.
Access online

This short article presents Weiss' seminal framework with which to understand how research is used by policymakers. A number of models are offered: Knowledge-Driven model; Problem-solving model; Interactive model; Political model; Tactical model; and Enlightenment model. For Weiss, it is the Enlightenment model which offers the most fruitful perspective on the way in which policymakers are rarely "able to cite findings of a specific study that influenced their decisions, but they have a sense that social science research has given them a backdrop of ideas and orientations that has had important consequences" (p. 429). This insight has paved the way for a great deal of analysis on the way in which research can have an indirect influence on policy through the shaping of ideas, beliefs and values which are not directly traced to a particular piece of research.

Davies, H.T.O., and Nutley, S.M. (2008). 'Learning More About How Research-Based Knowledge Gets Used: Guidance in the development of new empirical evidence'. New York: William T. Grant Foundation.
Access online

This primer offers an introduction to the discussion concerning how research is used in policymaking. As part of the William T. Grant Foundation's ongoing work on how to understand the uses of research in order to assess impact, the authors argue for a better understanding of what Carol Weiss termed the 'conceptual' use or 'enlightenment function' of research. In this model, research broadens or challenges people's understanding of issues and potential remedies. Davies and Nutley also call for increased study of the social processes and social contexts involved in research use. They also draw attention to the 'political' act of labelling knowledge 'research' and 'evidence', arguing that there is no easy way of separating research from the context of its use. Uses identified in the framework include: Research under-use, overuse and misuse; Strategic, political, and tactical uses of research, where research-based knowledge may be used to support pre-existing positions, undermine the positions of others, or legitimate already defined courses of action; Instrumental and conceptual uses of research, where decision-making is diffuse and research-based knowledge provides a background of theory and data that slowly engages local discourse; Process benefits from engagement with research, where the process of arriving at findings by engaging policymakers can have an influence; Individual research use and system-embedded uses, involving how knowledge is systematized and embedded.

National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research (NCDDR) (1996). 'A Review of the Literature on Dissemination and Knowledge Utilization'. Austin: NCDDR.
Access online

Research use and think tank context

Belletini, O. (2007). 'El papel de los centros de investigacion de politica publica en las reformas publicas implementadas en America Latina'. In Garce, A. and Gerardo, U. *Think Tanks y políticas publics en Latinoamerica: Dinamicas globales y realidades regionales***. Buenos Aires: IDRC/Konrad Adenauer Stiftung/Prometeo libros.**
Order online

In this book chapter the authors argues that the function of research cannot be divorced from the context in which it is produced. Based upon ongoing work on Latin American think tanks

undertaken by CIPPEC, this refers specifically to exogenous influences upon think tanks, which play a number of roles. In turn these roles reflect upon the kinds of research they do, and why. These roles include articulating (*problematizando*) public problems and making them the objective of public policies; designing alternative policy prescriptions based on research; helping to decide the 'right' or preferred course of action implementing reforms and public policies; and monitoring politicians and public policies, for instance though budget monitoring, evaluation of policies, and transparency initiatives.

Weaver, R. K. (1989). 'The Changing World of Think Tanks'. *Political Science and Politics*, **Vol. 22, No. 3, 563-578.**
Access online

Based on analysis of think tanks in the United States, Weaver attempts to account for their emergence and functions. In this article the author argues that different research functions reflect different types of organizations, or think tanks. Key types include 'government' think tanks (or contract research organizations) which possess a close relationship with policy makers and thus produce on a demand-led basis; academic universities and 'universities without students' that offer a greater degree of autonomy and long-term influencing objectives which are oriented towards changing the climate of opinion rather than directly influencing a policy in a particular way; and 'advocacy' think tanks which have a strong political or ideological bent. The functions and objectives of research cannot, it is argued, be divorced from organizational objectives and orientations.

Braun, M., Chudnovsky, M., Ducote, N., & Weyrauch, V. (2007). 'Lejos de "Thinktanklandia": los institutos de investigacion de politicas en los países en desarrollo'. Buenos Aires: CIPPEC.
Access online
(In Spanish)

This paper presents 18 case studies considering what affects policy influence in Latin American, Asian, African, and Central European contexts. It adopts a framework which identifies exogenous and endogenous factors to explain how think tanks have influenced policy with their research. Institutional and organizational factors relating to how a think tank was formed, why, and when are particularly important, alongside considerations of who a think tanks communicates research to (i.e. who they are trying to influence) and how they are funded. This paper therefore suggests that the function of research depends upon both exogenous and endogenous factors, and in many ways reflect them.

Examples of how research functions

Court, J. and Young, J. (2003). 'Bridging Research and Policy: Insights from 50 Case Studies'. ODI Working Paper 213. London: ODI
Access online

As part of the first phase of the three-year Global Development Network (GDN) Bridging Research and Policy project, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) collected and analyzed 50 summary case studies on research-policy links. This paper reports on the process, findings and implications of the case study work. The cases include examples of a wide range of types

of research undertaken by a variety of organizations. A few cases describe situations where research had an immediate and direct impact on policy, although in most cases the impact was less direct and took some time, requiring strenuous advocacy efforts. The cases have been examined from the perspective of research uptake pathways, addressing the question: why are some ideas that circulate in the research-policy arenas picked up and acted on, while others are ignored and disappear? In terms of research functions, the main point to emerge from this rich discussion is that although the case studies focus on specific pieces of research around specific policy events, much research influences policy indirectly by informing the general discourse within which specific policies are made, for example the cases of biodiversity in Saudi Arabia, measuring inflation in Peru, fiscal policy in Chile, and the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) in Pakistan, all illustrate how research can provide stores of knowledge that filter into policy as the need arises. Further, projects and programs need to be clear about distinguishing research objectives from capacity-building and policy influence.

For further discussion on differentiating objectives see Section 2.3.

Tim Hope, Reece Walters (2008). Critical thinking about the uses of research. Evidence-based policy series. London: Centre for Crime and Justice Studies King's College London
Access online

This monograph is concerned with the policy process in the UK and the former Labour government's seemingly politicised use of evidence in justifying the 'war on terror', drugs policy, and the demise of civil liberties amongst others. The authors accuse the former government of a 'whitewash', and argue that they did not encourage enlightened public debate. In particular, the paper examines how the former government engaged in 'half-truths' in order to present criminological data 'for political gain'.

Monaghan, M. (2010) 'Adversarial Policies and Evidence Utilization: Modeling the Changing Evidence and Policy Connection'. *German Policy Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 17–52.
Access online

This journal article considers the role of evidence in 'adversarial' policy formulation where there is a contested evidence base. By reviewing the recent literature on UK drug policy – an adversarial policy domain - and the literature on research utilization, the paper argues that in most cases policy is usually a 'blend' of evidence-based policy and policy-based evidence. While existing models of research utilization have been employed to explain how research is used politically, the author argues that these tend to offer only limited descriptions of the evidence and policy connection. This therefore paper puts forward a newer 'processual' model which it claims can account for the many subtleties involved in explaining the evidence and policy connection in adversarial domains. This model assumes that a number of competing groups try to shape the policy agenda, but that this is an open, unequal, and unpredictable competition. Unlike the 'evolutionary' model of research uptake (Stevens, 2007) there is, however, no inevitability that research will play any role in decision making. The processual model therefore accepts that evidence is embedded in the policy process and could percolate into decision-making, but that this is always contingent on numerous factors including the impact of the wider political process.

3. THE COMMUNICATION OF RESEARCH

In this section:

- Knowledge translation
- Digital tools and their impact on policymaking, research and communications
- The media and policy influence

3.1. KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION & BROKERING

Influencing policy through research is not a simple case of producing knowledge that informs policymakers in a linear fashion, as the literature in Section 2 demonstrates. How knowledge is *used* depends to a large extent upon who is it communicated to, how, and in what form. As a group of IDRC researchers describe: "*Knowledge is like fine wine. The researcher brews it, the scientific paper bottles it, the peer review tastes it, the journal sticks a label on it, and archive systems store it carefully in a cellar. Splendid! Just one small problem: wine is only useful when somebody drinks it. Wine in a bottle does not quench thirst. Knowledge Translation (KT) opens the bottle, pours the wine into a glass, and serves it*" ([Bennett & Jessani, 2011](#)). The translation of knowledge is a process that ensures research-based knowledge is interesting, understood, relevant, reaches the right audience, and compels action.

Discussions surrounding why and how knowledge is be 'translated' are vast, and often encompass a number of related concepts such as Knowledge Brokering, Knowledge Transfer, Knowledge Intermediaries, and Knowledge Management. Predicated – as much of the research-to-policy literature is – on the assumption that there is a 'gap' to be 'bridged' between the research and policymaking communities, these concepts are used distinctively and also interchangeably as a way of describing the processes that take place at the research and policy 'interface' in order to turn research into action. Recently, these range of concepts have been grouped together under the umbrella term *K** as a result of an ongoing work on knowledge sharing involving the ODI, World Bank, and the United Nations University. Described as the collective term "for the set of functions and processes at the various interfaces between knowledge, practice, and policy", the various concepts it encompasses are thought to "improve the way in which knowledge is shared and applied; improving processes already in place to bring about more effective and sustainable change" ([Shaxson, 2012](#)).

The concept of 'knowledge brokering' is particularly popular ([UNCTAD Virtual Institute, 2006](#); [Fisher and Vogel, 2008](#); [Cooper, 2010](#)), alongside that of Knowledge Translation ([Ward et al, 2011;](#) [Bennett & Jessani, 2011](#)). Knowledge translation is often described in relation to knowledge brokers or intermediaries who bridge the gap between not only between the research and policy spheres but also between the policymakers and the media ([White, 2012](#)). Many different types of actors can be knowledge brokers and intermediaries by fulfilling a role within a knowledge system, including NGOs, universities, advocacy organizations, and think tanks ([Knowledge Brokers' Forum, 2010](#)); and increasingly organizations are using the language of knowledge systems to describe what they do, for example The African Development Bank identifies itself as a 'knowledge broker that', due to its link with

governments and with policy makers, has a role in brokering research for inclusion member countries' policies ([Jones, 2011](#)).

The knowledge broker or intermediary is often characterized as a 'middle man' in the literature, literally a 'bridge' which sits in between two distinct spaces. The importance of using networks to bring groups together is emphasized, as is perceived neutrality, communication and mediation skills, and political awareness. In addition to networking, knowledge brokers are described as performing functions such as research synthesis based on analysis; creating partnerships for research; facilitating access to data and evidence; and convening meetings at a variety of different levels and for varying purposes.

However, the traditional approach to viewing knowledge translation and brokering as a process 'inbetween' policy and research has been criticized ([Mendizabal, 2013](#)) ([Mendizabal, 2012](#)) for creating an artificial distinction between researchers and policymakers. Further, there is a lack of clarity as to what K* actually *is*: while grouping together a set of related concepts in order to avoid the expansion of additional terms ('jargon') Mendizabal argues that "it feels a bit contradictory that to get rid of jargon the proponents of K* have created more jargon" ([Mendizabal, 2012](#)).

An alternative understanding of the functions already being carried out by think tanks, research institutes, and others is the concept of 'boundary workers' ([Mendizabal, 2013](#)) proposed by Robber Hope, which refers to individuals or groups that are *part of* the communities they seek to bring together. Rather than sitting 'in the middle', boundary workers are accountable to these communities, and they are experts in their fields - *not* experts in being intermediaries. In demonstrating the point the author writes: *"A good economics editor should be just as capable of authoring an economics book or paper as an economics researcher. A science analyst in a government department must be capable of understanding and, if not replicating at least following, the nuances of the research process behind the latest academic studies. But both the editor and the analyst must be competent in their jobs as journalists and policymakers, respectively."*

Successful boundary arrangements have the following characteristics:

- Double participation (people from both communities are represented)
- Dual accountability (boundary workers are accountable to the rules of both communities)
- Boundary objects (they produce outputs that incorporate knowledge and methods from both communities: e.g. econometrist or climate models, biannual audits, reports, etc.)
- Co-production (early or premature consensus-seeking or compromise building is a serious threat to successful boundary work which must allow both communities' knowledge and methods to work alongside each other)
- Metagovernance and capacity building (to strengthen the relationship)

According to Hoppe there are seven types of discourse on boundary work that can be identified in Dutch practice and that may provide some indication of their nature in other contexts:

- Rational facilitation of political accommodation: e.g. experienced and prominent members of advisory bodies, or civil servants attending to the knowledge and look-out function in departmental agencies
- Knowledge brokerage: e.g. civil servants or consultants who exploit opportunities for instrumental learning
- Mega-policy strategy: e.g. government oriented think tanks review long term strategic policy guidelines and pivotal assumptions in policy beliefs in use in light of the most recent sound science and argument.
- Policy analysis: e.g. policy units or analysts who provide politicians, and others with evidence based intelligence on long-standing programmatic relations with established policy networks.
- Policy advice: e.g. individuals or organisations that advice decision makers about the acceptability and feasibility of policy proposals incorporating the best available knowledge on what works.
- Post-normal science advice; e.g individuals, programmes or organisations that wish to create and institutionalize more stable role and interaction patters so that scientists and policymakers may engage in productive, open dialogue
- Deliberative –procedure advice; e.g. advisory bodies or permanent secretaries with civil servant status that maintain clear and transparent procedures.

This translated into four levels of boundary work:

- Boundary work is (trans-)nationally culture bound. Without them it is difficult to translate policy recommendations that may greatly depend on cultural norms.
- Boundary work across different policy dimensions. This emerges from the existence of different roles of different players in different policy domains. And different roles of evidence in different policy domains.
- Boundary arrangements and organizations that institutionally facilitate the science/politics interactions and knowledge/power structures in each policy domain.
- Boundary work in projects. These deal with project level infrastructure –and project design.

RESOURCES

Hoppe, R. (2010). From "knowledge use" towards "boundary work": sketch of an emerging new agenda for inquiry into science-policy interaction. In R. J. in't Veld (Ed.), *Knowledge Democracy: Consequences for Science, Politics, and Media.* **Heidelberg: Springer**

This paper explores the concept of boundary workers drawing from the Dutch experience. It presents different levels of boundary work as well different functions thus demonstrating the range of individuals, bodies, processes, and organisations that can fulfil this role. According to Hoppe, the successful boundary arrangements include:
Successful boundary arrangements have the following characteristics:

- Double participation (people from both communities are represented)

- Dual accountability (boundary workers are accountable to the rules of both communities)
- Boundary objects (they produce outputs that incorporate knowledge and methods from both communities: e.g. econometrist or climate models, biannual audits, reports, etc.)
- Co-production (early or premature consensus-seeking or compromise building is a serious threat to successful boundary work which must allow both communities' knowledge and methods to work alongside each other)
- Metagovernance and capacity building (to strengthen the relationship)

Bennett, G. and Jessani, N. (2011). 'The Knowledge Translation Toolkit'. Ottawa: IDRC.
Access online

Based on attempts to bridge the 'know-do' gap in health systems research, this toolkit offers guidance to researchers in the broad area of Knowledge Translation (KT). The guide aims to provoke new debate rather than offer simple recipes, while enabling researchers to try different approaches to KT. Targeting researchers at both individual and organizational level, the authors argue that there are four reasons why the 'know-do' gap exists: lack of knowledge or access to information; lack of understanding of information or why it is important; perceived lack of relevance – information is thought to be irrelevant and not beneficial to a particular agenda; and lack of agreement with the information provided. KT makes 'research matter' by ensuring that research reaches more people, is more clearly understood, and is more likely to lead to positive action. In short, that their work becomes more useful, and therefore more valuable. Achieving this demands better 'communication'— transmitting information that is relevant, accessible, and meaningful to those who could benefit from it. Knowledge that has been translated therefore informs, guides, and motivates; thereby turning latent knowledge into active knowledge. KT ensures that the targets of research messages think that research is interesting, relevant, clear and credible, and compels action. The guide is organized in five sections:
- **The Concept** (Section I) – closing the know-do gap: turning knowledge into action.
- **The Audience** (Section II) – identifying who has the power to take action (policy/practice).
- **The Message** (Section III) – packaging the knowledge appropriately for that audience.
- **The Medium** (Section IV) – delivering the message, closing the gap, triggering the action.
- **The Tools** (Section V) – a few more thoughts about the methods of doing all those things.

Ward, V., Smith, S., Carruthers, S., Hamer, S., and House, A. (2010) 'Knowledge Brokering: Exploring the process of transferring knowledge into action'. Leeds: University of Leeds.
Access online

This paper presents the findings of a project funded by the Medical Research Council on how knowledge is transferred in the health sector. The research was designed to: (1) gain a better understanding of the processes involved in knowledge transfer and (2) produce a template to help researchers, practitioners and decision makers plan and evaluate initiatives for transferring knowledge into action. The authors argue that knowledge transfer, rather than

involving a simple linear process, is complex, dynamic and iterative, and that a model which shows how this process works can help research producers and users plan and evaluate knowledge transfer activities. The researchers have developed a model involving two practical frameworks for thinking about knowledge transfer – one for the user and one for the producers of research. The authors suggest that further research will involve developing the frameworks in conjunction with research users and producers, testing their applicability in different contexts and testing their effectiveness as tools for planning and evaluating the knowledge transfer process.

Shaxson, L. (2012) 'Expanding our Understanding of K*(Kt, KE, Ktt, KMb, KB, KM, etc.)': A concept paper emerging from the K* conference held in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, April 2012.
Access online

This paper provides a core concept of K*, which is the collective term for the set of processes that take place during the interfaces between knowledge, policy and practice and have the objective of improving the sharing of knowledge and its use. The processes that make up K* are knowledge management, knowledge transfer, knowledge translation, knowledge exchange, knowledge brokering and knowledge mobilisation, all of which share principles and functions and have blurred boundaries between them. These processes can be best understood in a spectrum: they might have different roles but they have a common origin, which is the enabling of access to different sources of information. The paper also provides case studies analysing how K* has been approached by think tanks, international organizations and governmental institutions.

Vogel, I. and Fisher, C. (2008) 'Locating the power of in-between: How research brokers and intermediaries support evidence-based pro-poor policy and practice'. Brighton: IDS.
Access online

This background paper, written for the Conference "Locating the power of in-between: how research brokers and intermediaries support evidence-based pro-poor policy and practice" which took place in Centurion, Pretoria South Africa on 1-2 July 2008, discusses the definition of pro – poor evidence based policy and what role research brokers and intermediaries have in the development of said policy. The paper understands research brokers and intermediaries as actors who are involved in the process of generating, organising or communicating information based on research for a particular purpose and for specific social groups, facilitating exchanges between these. Due to their access to research based information, they provide rich sources for the development of evidence based policy.

Cooper, A. (2010) 'Knowledge Brokers - A Promising Knowledge Mobilization Strategy to Increase Research Use and Its Impact in Education'. Denver: AERA
Access online

This article discusses knowledge brokers' capacity to bridge the gap between research and policy regarding education in Canada. It outlines the different types of knowledge brokers that are involved in bringing together research on education and policy, such as ministry research branches, universities, think tanks, advocacy organizations, as well as a list of several types of knowledge brokering models. It concludes that knowledge brokers are useful for the

mobilization of information across the different organizations, departments and stakeholders invested in education in Canada.

UNCTAD Virtual Institute (2006). 'Research-Based Policy Making: Bridging The Gap Between Researchers And Policy Makers: Recommendations for researchers and policy makers'. UNCTAD-WTO-ITC workshop on trade policy analysis, Geneva, 11 - 15 September 2006.
Access online

It is common for there to be a lack of communication and interaction between researchers and policy makers, which results in a lack of evidence based policy. This article, a report resulting from a UNCTAD – WHO – ITC workshop, states that, in the case of research and trade, findings can only be used if there is close cooperation between researchers and policy makers and if both parties understand the need for topic relevance, communication, dissemination and implementation of research output. Among its recommendations for researchers is the need to disseminate their information, to have direct contacts with decision makers and to make their research more relevant. Meanwhile, it recommends policy makers to involve researchers in policy consultation, and to create channels that inform academia of major policy questions.

Knowledge Brokers' Forum (2010) 'E-Discussion: Knowledge Brokering and Intermediary concepts.' Knowledge Brokers' Forum.
Access online

This document is a compilation of emails exchanged by individuals who identify themselves as knowledge brokers and participate in the Knowledge Brokers' Forum. The document concludes that knowledge brokers come from different backgrounds – they can be individuals, think tanks, advocacy organizations, libraries and resource centres, NGOs, even countries. While the different concepts linked to knowledge production are mostly used interchangeably, they propose that a knowledge broker is as proactive facilitator of knowledge that connects people and organizations to add value to existing information.

Examples

McIntosh White, J. (2012) 'Translating Technology, Science and Health: Public Information Officers as Knowledge Transfer Intermediaries'. New Mexico: University of New Mexico.
Access online

There is still belief among the scientific community that the media is not a convenient channel through which research finding may be announced, preferring to address the public directly. Public Information Officers (PIOs) act as knowledge transfer intermediaries between scientists and the mass media, and try to distribute scientific research to the latter in order for them to publish research stories by using news releases, institutional websites and direct contacts with reporters and editors. However, many PIOs are lacking in skills that would enable them to effectively speak with scientists. This study attempts to measure the technological and scientific orientation of PIOs and studies how this correlates to PIOs roles in the knowledge transfer process.

Jones, B. (2011). 'Linking Research to Policy: the African Development Bank as a Knowledge Broker'. Tunis: African Development Bank Group
Access online

This working paper analyzes the role of the African Development Bank as a knowledge broker for regional member countries. It argues that the ADB is well – positioned for this role because it already conducts high quality research and has close ties to relevant policy makers which it can leverage to make a bigger impact on policy.

Boundary workers

Mendizabal, E. (2012). K* (and * stands for what exactly?) onthinktanks Blogpost, April 27th 2012.
Access online

The emerging K* concept is a distraction from existing individuals, groups and organizations that already serve as knowledge managers, brokers, intermediaries, etc. It does not offer anything new other than an umbrella concept under which all the others could go; it creates a differentiation between research and professions where there necessarily isn't; and it gives the impression that research moves linearly towards policy when it might not always be the case. The article urges the refocusing on entities that already fulfil these roles.

Mendizabal, E. (2013). 'An alternative to the supply, demand and intermediary model: competencies for all'. Onthinktanks blogpost, January 13th 2013.
Access online

Addressing the traditional distinctions between those who supply research, those who demand it, and those 'in-between', this article uses Robert Hoppe's work on boundary workers and Joseph Braml's description of think tanks (and other organizations that fulfil functions that focus on research, analysis, and communications) as 'an organization homo mediaticus' to support the author's criticism of the way in which knowledge intermediaries are understood within the research-to-policy community. In Mendizabal's conception, a boundary worker is unlike the intermediary that sits 'in-between' two or more separate players or communities. Boundary workers instead must 'abide by' and be accountable to the communities it brings together. Thus, a boundary worker is not 'in the middle' but is an active and respected member of both the research and policy communities. Being a specialist in 'intermediation' is in fact not that important; rather, an effective boundary worker is competent in the trades of the communities it brings together and adds value to the interaction by its own interventions. Examples of boundary workers include think tanks, university research centres, and policy analysis units within ministries. To demonstrate the point, the author argues that: "A good economics editor should be just as capable of authoring an economics book or paper as an economics researcher. A science analyst in a government department must be capable of understanding and, if not replicating at least following, the nuances of the research process behind the latest academic studies. But both the editor and the analyst must be competent in their jobs as journalists and policymakers, respectively."

3.2. DIGITAL TOOLS AND THEIR IMPACT ON POLICYMAKING, RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATIONS

Digital communications has changed the research-to-policy interface, with communication strategies for researchers undergoing significant changes with the advent of the digital age. Digital tools have also broadened political participation among populations as information is gathered more easily and communication with others is faster. Importantly for researchers, they are becoming increasingly accessible to publish and distribute research, and to interact with their 'audience'. The 2011 Arab Spring arguably highlighted how the internet age has contributed to changing patterns of political participation. It is thought that digital tools have great potential in promoting and fostering new paths of participation as well as protest, and social media is increasingly being relied upon to predict social capital and political and social participation (de Zuñiga, Jung and Valenzuela, 2012). The proliferation of both personal and professional blogs can ensure that particular issues and questions become part of national and global agendas; while also promoting new channels of democratic involvement by promoting active discussion and participation in their readers (Drezner and Farrell, 2004; de Zuñiga, Veenstra et. al, 2010). Mobile phones in African countries have shown that individuals develop creative ways of gathering information, creating an impact both on users and on the technology itself (Wasserman, 2010). Hacktivism, the legal or illegal use of digital tools in the pursuit of a political end, such as protest, is also on the rise (Samuel, 2004).

Not everyone is quite so optimistic about the impact of social media in political participation and protest, however. While convenient, social media does not start revolutions, and these must still be conducted through traditional channels of mobilisation and motivation (Papic and Noonan, 2011).

Technologies such as Facebook and Twitter as well as other digital platforms now permit real time interaction with other individuals, which makes sharing information faster and easier. But how have researchers adapted themselves to these technologies? Some have embraced them and others are wary of their implications. For example, the way that scientists use social media depends on their discipline and their sentiments (Van Eperen and Marincola, 2001). While a group of scientists consider social media platforms like Facebook or Twitter as unprofessional, and with possible negative consequences as it could compromise their research, others believe that they are useful in disseminating and communicating their research to actors they would otherwise have not had access to. Virtual research environments (Quinell, 2011) have also been created by researchers to facilitate interaction with actors not geographically available. Social media has also come to be considered as a peer evaluation system (Hermida, 2011), as fellow researchers can access research and give feedback in real time.

Interestingly, there is almost no literature that focuses on the impact or effects of social media and digital tools on the quality of research. Nonetheless, studies have focused on the effect of social media and open access on the peer review process (Pickard, 2012). Some feel that traditional peer review processes are too slow and lacks transparency – social media offers alternatives such as comment crowdsourcing and public reviews. Open access is also a matter of debate for the research community: some feel that it is an important part of the research system as it allows for more access to research and wider dissemination, as well as instant citation (Joseph, 2012; Brody, 2006), while others consider that editors are still needed to make sure that research is universally understood and to assure the reputation of journals (Brown, 2012). It has also been argued that open access journals have not shown to have a higher citation rate than non-open access publications (Pringle, 2012).

The use of digital tools is now an established part of the research dissemination process, with most communications guides now covering social media and web tools. It is becoming increasingly important that researchers are well versed in these technologies, with research showing that the use of digital tools is an effective way of communicating research and influencing policy (Girard and Acosta y Lara, 2012). For instance, the European Commission's Communicating Research Guide specifies that a good communications team should have professional communication specialists that can ensure a higher potential for research dissemination and impact. It is also imperative to have a corporate design suitable both for print and web pages (Directorate-General for Research, 2010). The Overseas Development Institute's online strategy has won international recognition (Scott, 2012), reflecting the centrality of digital approaches to communication.

Social media guides teach researchers how to use these platforms for social citations, sharing, blogging, microblogging, etc. There are also guides on how to use specific programs, like Twitter (Mollett, Moran and Dunleavy, 2011; Cann, Dimitriou and Hooley, 2011). Digital tools can also be used to foster evidence – based policy, by communicating research through communications teams, web sites and interacting with the press; measuring impact and influence may also be done through digital platforms (Directorate-General for Research Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities, 2010; Scott, 2012).

RESOURCES

Digital tools and research

Quinnell, S-L. (2011). 'Becoming a Networked Researcher – using social media for research and researcher development'. LSE Impact of Social Sciences Blog. London: London School of Economics.
Access online

The author has developed a virtual research environment which included a blog, a message board, a forum and instant messaging, for the purpose of communicating with those actors pertinent to her doctoral thesis who were globally dispersed. Social media enabled her to contact individuals interested in her work that she couldn't have done through traditional methods. Now the platform provides "how to" guides on social media and will eventually instruct other researchers to produce their own virtual research environments.

Hermida, A. (2011) 'Social media is inherently a system of peer evaluation and is changing the way scholars disseminate their research, raising questions about the way we evaluate academic authority'. LSE Impact of Social Sciences Blog. London: London School of Economics
Access online

Social media can serve as a system of peer evaluation, in which participation and engagement is present and rewarded and where reputation is based on what an individual brings to the network. So far, peer review processes and the way that authority is assigned to research has not changed much, and so it is time to consider the implications of ICTs on research. A framework to understand the impact of social media can be created by looking at the five building blocks of social media.

Van Eperen, L. and Marincola, F.M. (2011) 'How scientists use social media to communicate their research'. *Journal of Transnational Medicine*, **Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 199**
Access online

The way that scientists use social media platforms is dependent on discipline and sentiments. For instance, a considerable group of scientists consider Facebook and Twitter as unprofessional platforms that could compromise advancements in their research, which is why they steer towards social media suited for academic research (e.g.: LabSpaces). These scientists look for their niche and communicate their findings within a small web community. Others, however, consider that Facebook and Twitter are useful in disseminating their research and communicating with other researchers as well as with the general audience.

Girard, B. and Acosta y Lara, E. (eds.) (2012) 'Impact 2.0. New mechanisms for linking research and policy'. Montevideo: Fundación Comunica.
Access online (English version)
Access online (Spanish version)

This book features case studies and reports on the use of "web 2.0⊡ and social networking applications and services to increase the impact of research on policy in Latin America. While the experiments and evaluations undertaken under the Impact 2.0 umbrella displayed a tremendous diversity in terms of the online tools they used, their methodological approaches, their communication strategies etc., certain patterns emerged and overall the various projects can be seen to have adopted three distinct approaches to their use of social networking to link research and policy: 1) Projects in which researchers made use of online campaigns to make their research conclusions more visible to the public at large, usually with the expectation that public support and visibility would give their proposals increased legitimacy and support among policymaker, 2) Projects in which researchers sought to support online public consultation processes in collaboration with government entities, and 3) Projects which explored the use of web 2.0 and social networking services to open direct channels of communication between researchers, policymakers and other stakeholders in order to communicate research, collaborate on specific activities, and/or with a more-or-less explicit objective of getting them to know each other better and to build trust.

Guides to using digital communications for research impact

Cann, A., Dimitriou, K. & T. Hooley (2011) 'Social Media: A guide for Researchers'. Leicester: International Center for Guidance.
Access online

This guide lists the social media tools that help researchers in finding, using and disseminating information. Social media can help in what the authors describe as the four parts of the research production process: identification of knowledge, creation of knowledge, quality assurance and dissemination. The guide lists tools for social citation sharing, blogging, microblogging, research and writing collaboration, etc.

Mollett, A., Moran, D., and Dunleavy, P. (2011) 'Using Twitter in university research, teaching and impact activities: A guide for academics and researchers'. London: LSE Public Policy Group

This practical guide was produced to instruct academics on how to use Twitter to broaden their audiences, disseminate their research more effectively, communicate with other researchers and gain access to other research. The guide offers step-by-step processes on, for instance, setting up a Twitter account.

Directorate-General for Research (2010) 'Communicating research for evidence-based policymaking: A practical guide for researchers in socio-economic sciences and humanities'. Brussels: European Commission

This guide instructs researchers on research communication for policy impact. Researchers and policy makers must communicate with each other, and researchers have to make sure that policy relevant issues at the heart of their research are clearly defined and communicated. The guide offers instruction on a number of approaches, including how to build a communications team, on using web sites, and interacting with the press.

Scott, N. (2012) 'ODI's award-winning online strategy explained'. Onthinktanks blogpost, September 19th 2012.

Nick Scott explains the ODI digital strategy, which was awarded Online Strategy of the Year at the Digital Communications Awards. They first identified three major challenges: creating demand for an idea, empowering their researchers and communicating on a tight budget. To face these challenges he proposed ´being there´ - posting at appropriate sites, using Twitter and Facebook and sending emails. 'Cradle to grey' would empower their researchers by making online activities central to the research, bolstering the reputation of the individual researchers. And finally, 'reusing the wheel', which meant that they would use free software like Wordpress, Flickr and Wikipedia, would help in communicating on a small budget.

Digital tools and political participation

de Zúñiga, H., Nakwong, J., and Valenzuela, S. (2012) 'Social Media Use for News and Individuals' Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Political Participation'. *Journal of Computer – Mediated Communication*, Issue 17, pp. 319-336

This report presents the research findings of a project which used U.S data to test whether social media can promote democratic participation among users. Its results show that after controlling demographic variables, traditional media use both online and offline, knowledge and efficacy, and the frequency and size of political discussion networks, information seeking via social media significantly predicts people's social capital and civic and political participatory behaviors. Other findings were that young people, minorities and people with lower levels of income and education are more inclined to use social media for news.

Drezner, D. and Farrell, H. (2004) 'The Power and Politics of Blogs'. Paper to be presented to the 2004 American Political Science Association

What is the role of blogs in political debate? This article argues that under specific circumstances blogs can socially construct an agenda that acts as a focal point for the media, thus shaping the political debate, particularly when blogs focus on a new or neglected issue. Two interrelated aspects of blogs work to do this: the unequal distribution of leaders across blogs, and the increasing interaction between them and the media.

de Zúñiga, H.G., Veenstra, G., Vraga, E. and Shah, D. (2010) 'Digital Democracy: Reimagining Pathways to Political Participation'. *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, **Vol. 7, No 1, pp. 36-51**
Access online

Bloggers are promoting new paths to democratic involvement through online channels that complement and give new life to conventional forms of political expression and participation. Blog readers do not just peruse these channels but are involved in an array of online and offline political activities; these two spheres are complementary and mutually supportive. In sum, the use of blogs promotes political participation.

Samuel, A. (2004). 'Hacktivism and the Future of Political Participation' (2004). PhD Thesis. Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University.
Access online

This doctoral thesis focuses on hacktivism, which consists of the nonviolent use of illegal or legally ambiguous digital tools in pursuit of political ends. Examples are web site defacements, redirects, information theft, virtual sabotage, etc. There are three types of hacktivism, and they all carry out policy circumvention, also known as legal noncompliance. Legal noncompliance may be either a strategic political response to a certain law, regulation or policy, which tries to nullify said law, regulation or policy and create certain benefits.

Papic, P. (2011) and Sean Noonan (2011) 'Social Media as a Tool for Protest'. *Stratfor Global Intelligence* **online article, 3 February 2011.**
Access online

This article argues that social media, by itself, does not start revolutions, and like any tool, has weaknesses and strengths and their results depend on how they are used and how accessible they are. It uses as examples the revolutions that took place in Tunisia and Egypt, in which protesters used social media. While social media is useful, it does not necessarily mobilise individuals to physically protest, nor is it free or repression from governmental counter – tactics and neither does it offer secrecy. It may help get the word around, but for protests to work there must still be a core message that unifies people, and traditional methods of mobilisation must still be applied. In short, the article concludes that social media is simply a convenience.

Wasserman, H. (2011) 'Mobile Phones, Popular Media, and Everyday African Democracy: Transmissions and Transgressions'. *Popular Communication*, **Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 146-158.**
Access online

How can mobile phones promote political participation and transmit information in Africa? Mobile phones are more widely used, more accessible and cost less than most ICTs but access is still is quite unequal and costs are still high, which has led users to resort to creative ways

of use that suggest there are alternative ways of thinking about the relationship between these technologies and political participation in this continent. This study proposes that mobile phone (and other types of ICTs) use should be approached from a perspective that focuses on the interaction between technology and society instead of looking only at the impact that technology has on individuals.

Scott, N. (2011) 'Responding to digital disruption of traditional communications: 'being there' communications' . On Think Tanks blogpost, September 19th 2011
Access online

How should researchers and organizations respond to digital disruption of traditional communications? Traditional communications comprise the media, as well as libraries and bookshops. Digital disruption of these channels are email broadcasts, websites and search engines, which make being seen and heard easier. However, as access to digital tools is very broad, there is an information overload and far more competition to stand out. "Being there" communications tries to overcome this digital disruption by placing content and links on sites that are visited on key audiences, instead of waiting for these to visit an organizational site.

Pickard, T. (2012). 'The Impact of Open Access and Social Media on Scientific Research' *Journal of Participatory Medicine*, **Vol. 4, July 2012.**
Access online

Social media and open access can change the way peer reviews are conducted. Traditional peer review processes are sometimes considered slow, and researchers do not know who is reviewing them as these mostly remain anonymous. Social media can provide alternatives such as crowdsourcing, which are reviews similar to those found in pages such as Amazon, where reviewers would no longer be anonymous. Open access platforms accept these innovations more readily as commentary is usually posted beside the publications.

Joseph, H. (2012). 'The impact of open access on research and scholarship: Reflections on the Berlin 9 Open Access Conference'. *College & Research Libraries News*, **Vol. 73, No. 2 83-87.**
Access online

The Open Access Conference came to the conclusion that open access now plays a central role in the research structure of the social sciences, the hard sciences and the humanities due to its effect on dissemination and impact. The full availability of research is now key to the research process as its most important access is its communication. It also stimulates researchers to work faster as they can now more quickly include and work upon others' findings.

McVeigh, M. (2004). Open Access Journals in the Thomson Database: Analysis of Impact Factors and Citation Patterns. Thomson Corporation study.
Access online
This Thomson – ISI study concludes that its open access journals do not get cited more frequently than non–open access publications, however there is no evidence that they do get cited less. Citations are due to the relevance of the articles for the readers, not to the fact that they get read.

3.3. HOW DOES THE MEDIA IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES INFORM THE PUBLIC AND INFLUENCE POLICY?

In a general sense, the media is widely credited to have an important role in ensuring good democratic governance. It can function as a watchdog, as a way of checking and balancing state powers; it can also further social inclusion by giving a voice to minority and marginalized groups; and it helps create an informed public (DFID, 2008). The media is also a social 'space' arena in which power relations are played out, and in which ideas are shaped (Castells, 2007). It is argued that in both developed and developing countries, including those with democratic political regimes, this means that power-holders possess an incentive to control the media, and thus the public agenda.

Recent commentaries on the media therefore focus on the role of the media in maintaining elite power structures by using media outlets as a means of defining the boundaries of public discussion (Desmond, 1996) (Castells, 2007). The media can be censored through direct (e.g. financial pressure or strict regulation) or indirect means ('soft' influencing of the media). The latter is thought to be more usual in democracies (Center for International Media Assistance, 2009). However the media possesses power in its own right, and is subject to financial incentives which influence what gets communicated, and how. For example, the literature highlights how the international media shapes the way conflicts are understood (Darley, 2005).

This context has a significant impact on how research is communicated. The media often acts as a broker between the research community and the general public (see Section 3.1), thereby introducing research to public discourse on policy issues (Mendizabal, 2011a, 2011b). This is important for influencing policy (Atim, 2012; Carpenter and Yngstrom, 2010; Makerere University, 2011). However there are significant capacity gaps amongst journalists in developing countries, and therefore huge barriers to the accurate and responsible communication of research in the media (Vincent, 2007). There is concern that in developing countries where there is a demand for skills development journalists are easily 'co-opted' into reporting on particular events (e.g. workshops of international donors) or from a particular perspective. For example, Zambian journalists are known to have received 'training' on how to report biotechnology issues by the international pro-biotechnology lobby (Broadbent, 2012).

One of the main concerns regarding the media and its relationship with research in developing countries is the way how journalists and researchers interact with each other. Generally, the link between these two actors is quite weak, for a variety of reasons; in Kenya and Uganda, for instance, while the media has focused on corruption, it has not looked at the link between tax collection, public spending and governance, due to a lack of strong networks that involve the media and allow it to use existing research and evidence (Relay, 2012). In India, journalists write stories on development but they are still not well informed by relevant research, signaling the need for a space where journalists and researchers can interact (Relay, 2012).

Further, research must comply with a number of conditions for the media to take an interest in it and report it. Research has to be 'newsworthy', concise and not overly technical. It has been found that if research is too complex or lacks readily-translatable 'headlines' its media coverage reduces considerably (Makere University, 2011; Uceda, 2011). The 'knowledge gap' between the media and research compounds this problem: most journalists in developing

countries do not have specialized knowledge on many issues such as science, development or climate change, which leads to oversimplified news coverage, sensationalism, and distrust on the part of researchers (Makere University, 2011; Kakonge, 2011; Vincent, 2007; Carpenter and Yngstrom, 2010).

However, researchers do believe in the importance of communicating evidence, if not through the media then through other channels, in order to inspire and inform development policy and practice, and increase dissemination and impact (Directorate – General for Research, 2010). As mentioned, the media therefore plays a central role in determining (as well as reflecting) the public agenda, which is why researchers strive for it to pay attention to their findings and improving collaboration (Yngstrom, 2011). Some organizations have taken the lead in bringing research and journalists together by providing the latter training in those topics which they focus on, for instance reproductive health, and grants for outstanding reporting (Oronje, Undie, Zulu and Crichton, 2011).

RESOURCES

Communicating research through the media

Center for International Media Assistance (2009) 'Funding for Media Development by Major Donors Outside the United States'. Washington D.C: Center for International Media Assistance
Access online

Media support is usually found within a governance agenda: funds are usually allocated to development projects that focus on governance, and these might have a media support area. This is particularly seen among Nordic countries, as well as the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. However, there seems to be a trend within donor organizations that pulls away from funds dealing with the media or with Information and Communication Technology.

Panos East Africa (2012) 'Tax and Governance: Improving media engagement with research on tax and governance in Kenya and Uganda'. Case study Working Paper, London: Panos
Access online

In these two countries, frustration among the population towards governmental accountability has been growing while East African and international research institutes have been investigating the implications of tax systems for governance. However, while the media was focusing on documenting corruption, it had not look at the link between tax collection, public spending and governance. This case study on how tax and governance are reported by the media in Kenya and Uganda has found that relationships between journalists and researchers must be built and existing networks must be strengthened in order to involve the media and use available research and evidence.

Panos East Asia (2012) 'Reporting research on dams and development in NE India'. Case Study Working Paper 2. London: Panos

This PANOS Relay programme report looks at how research is reported in North East India, where the local media has been active in reporting development issues but are not informed by relevant research. The document shares the results after a six month fellowship where they provided local journalists with resource materials, orientation workshops, field visits, publishing, reflection reports, etc. Some results were improved reporting skills, better quality of media coverage and new relationships between journalists and researchers. The most highlighted issue was the need to create spaces where researchers and the media could interact together, and how this was tackled by Relay.

Department of Journalism and Communication, Makerere University (2011). 'Media Coverage Of Science And Technology in Africa'. Report sponsored by UNESCO. Kampala: University of Makerere

While the media can act as a broker between scientific research and the general public, the relationship between the two is influenced by several factors. Research must be newsworthy and deemed interesting to the public by the media, and when scientific information is considered too complex, media coverage reduces significantly. This study reports that in Africa, particularly, there is a knowledge gap between science and the media since there are very few journalists who have expertise in scientific and technological issues and thus little ability in their comprehension. This results in an over simplistic interpretation of research, which is known as the least common denominator approach to knowledge, or in a sensationalist approach that exaggerates findings. The study also provides recommendations to the media like having policies and guidelines on scientific coverage, and investing in specialized knowledge of these issues in order to reduce the knowledge gap.

Atim, L. (2012) 'Promoting Research Communication – Panos Eastern Africa's experience'. London: Panos

Research can be communicated in several ways, such as through academic journals, university libraries, policy briefs, etc. However, many times the media is not considered as a useful dissemination tool. This report shares Relay's findings on how to bring researchers and journalists together, by acknowledging that the media is helpful in promoting participation in debates about research and policy; that working with the media results in researchers promoting the creation of a public interest media sector; that it creates accountability and transparency for research; and that it helps get funding and sponsors.

Vincent, R. (2007). 'Barriers to effective health journalism'. London: Panos

What factors impede journalists to accurately report health research and support debate on health? This report uses data gathered for the Health Journalism Partnership, which includes a global survey of over 450 organizations that work with health media support; interviews in 16 countries; and four in depth case studies, such as discrimination against HIV / AIDS and the media in Jamaica. Researchers are commonly wary of the media due to fears about sensationalism and misreporting, while there is little access to reliable

information from national health ministries, health agencies and governments in certain countries, which leads journalists to get information from other sources.

Carpenter, J. and Yngstrom, I. (2010) 'Research makes the news: Strengthening media engagement with research to influence policy'. London: Panos
Access online

Political and institutional context are important in order to understand the capacity of the media to foster public debate about research and evidence, and to influence policy. What factors strengthen media capacity to do so? Journalists should be able to use research to create interesting and compelling stories that are related to policy making agendas. Meanwhile, researchers should produce policy – relevant outputs and work with knowledge intermediaries to give their research a format that the media can use. The relationship between journalists and researchers must be strengthened, while civil society activists should drive debate around policy related research.

Oronje, R., Undie, C., Zulu, E. and Crichton, J. (2011) 'Engaging media in communicating research on sexual and reproductive health and rights in sub-Saharan Africa: experiences and lessons learned'. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, Vol. 9, Suppl.1.
Access online

Around the world, the media often fails to priorities sexual and reproductive health and rights issues or report them in an accurate manner. This is particularly true in Sub Saharan Africa, where media coverage of reproductive health issues is poor due to the weak capacity and motivation of reporting these issues by media practitioners. This paper is an analysis of the African Population and Health Research Centre's strategy to engage journalists in order to increase media coverage of these issues by providing training and grants for exceptional journalism.

Kakonge, J.O. (2011). 'The Role of Media in the Climate Change Debate in Developing Countries'. *Global Policy Journal*, Global Policy Essay, November 2011.
Access online

This study finds that journalists are uncomfortable in covering climate change issues as they are "generalists" and do not have training in science and environment. While they might be interested in such topics, training is expensive and in developing countries most media outlets lack the resources to send their journalists to attend specialized courses. This report suggests that as most developing countries direct funds to raise public awareness on climate change, part of this money could go to media organizations in order for them to publish climate change – related articles and stories that are easy to use by the general public.

Uceda, R. (2011) 'Una extraña pareja. Relación entre los medios de comunicación y los centros de investigación en políticas pública'. In: Correa Aste, N. and Mendizabal, E., *Vínculos entre conocimiento y política. El rol de la investigación en el debate público en América Latina*. CIES, ODI, UP and EBPDN. .
Access online
(In Spanish)

What is the relationship between the media and research institutions in Latin America? Editors from important Latin American media outlets report that they generally do not disseminate research produced by organizations such as think tanks. This is due to inappropriate research format for media outlets and the fact that journalism in this region is more attracted towards sensationalist topics. Editors feel that research has to be news worthy for them to use it in their publications.

Mendizabal, E. (2011a) New Book: Think Tanks, politics and the media in Latin America (in spanish). Onthinktanks blogpost, September 30th 2011.
Access online

The book *Vinculos entre conocimiento y politica: el rol de la investigacion en el debate publico en America Latina* was launched with the participation of Enrique Mendizabal and Norma Correa (editors), Martin Tanaka and Mercedes Botto (authors), and Antonio Romero from the Think Tank Initiative commenting during a Think Tank Initiative meeting of Latin American think tanks. This book is the result of a shared concern among a group of researchers and professionals interested in further understanding the links between knowledge and policy in Latin America. Its main interest is to explore the factors that influence the roles that evidence can play in the public policy cycle; in order words, to make that process a researchable topic. The book looks to highlight that knowledge producers like researchers and consultants have a partial role in the definition of the terms of debate on public policy and that it is indispensable to better understand how the media, political parties, state powers, public officials and social movements use evidence based on research during the policy cycle.

Mendizabal, E (2011b) 'How to influence difficult publics? Lessons from the Chilean media'. Onthinktanks blogpost, May 25th 2011.
Available online

David Hojman's study* of Semana Económica's (Chilean newspaper El Mercurio's editorial page) policy influencing strategy offers some lessons and practical advice on how to influence difficult publics. In his study Hojman focused on the messages that Semana Economica was trying to put forward; whether the message had changed over time; the identification of important individuals; and who the messages were addressed to, and what were their objectives. Messages should be consistent and specific and should coincide with real processes and events. He also assumed that even though the sender and the receiver have different agendas there must be some overlap for there to be communication, and that with difficult publics some message was better than no message at all.
* Hojman, D. E. (1997). El Mercurio's Editorial Page ("La Semana Economica") and Neoliberal Policy Making in Today's Chile. In W. Fowler (Ed.), Ideologues and Ideologies in Latin America. Westport: Greenwood Press.

The media, power, and participation

Castells, M. (2007) 'Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society'. *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 1, pp. 238-266.
Access online

This paper uses existing literature and case studies to argue that the media is where power relations are shaped and decided. Messages that do not exist in the media do not exist in the public mind, which is why the media is the social space where power is established. However,

the emergence of new spaces for interaction such as social media and the internet have created what is known as mass self – communication and has permitted the entrance of political actors that wish to subvert established power relations. The political actors that make up society like corporations and interest groups are aware of this power struggle, and so attempt to control what is presented through the media. This has consequences for media politics and its relationship with political legitimacy as well as the role of mass media in producing culture.

Podesta, D. (2009) 'Soft Censorship: How Governments around the Globe Use Money to Manipulate the Media'. Washington D.C: The Center for International Media Assistance.
Access online

Censorship of the news media is now manifesting itself in very subtle ways, a phenomenon that can be referred to as "soft censorship". This consists of influencing news coverage by financially pressuring media companies that are seen as overly critical of a government, and by rewarding those media outlets that portray the government in a positive light. There are three manifestations of this phenomenon: 1) local and national governments use advertising to financially support media outlets; 2) corporations are pressured by the government to advertise in certain media, and 3) journalists are paid directly to write positive articles.

Smith, D. (1996) 'Democracy and the Media in Developing Countries: A Case Study of the Philippines'. Leeds: University of Leeds.
Access online

This case study on the Philippines finds that the role of the press in this country has been closely bound to the interests of the ruling elites, who have considerable control over the public and media agenda. Philippine media continuously reports corruption and crime, but the misdistribution and abuse of economic and political power remains unspoken about, which leads to elite economic and political activity to be free from accountability as elite ownership affiliations impedes the media from discussing it.

Broadbent, E., (2012) 'Research-based evidence in African policy debates: The contemporary debate on genetically modified organisms in Zambia'. EBPDN Case Study 3. London: EBPDN/Mwananchi
Access online

This case study considers contemporary discussions surrounding Zambia's acceptance of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The study found that while the debate was framed by development narratives such as human rights and national ownership, much of the research-based evidence being cited in support of GMOs was private sector-financed. Importantly, the researcher found that Zambian journalists had received training on how to report on biotechnology issues by the pro-GMO USAID and private companies. This draws attention the wider issue of *who* undertakes and funds capacity building for the media when this can be instrumentalized in ways that reflect political and economic interests.

Puddephatt, A. (2006). 'Voices of war: Conflict and the role of the media'. Copenhagen: International Media Support
Access online

This report suggests that the media can either take an active role in the conflict and is responsible for increasing violence, or it can stay independent and out of the conflict. This is determined by the kind of relationship that it has with the actors in conflict, and with the power holders in society. The media can also become a rallying point for combatants, who will try to shape media output to present them in a favorable light. Policy makers should thus focus on how the media be used to foster the public sphere in ways that will allow nonviolent resolutions of conflict.

Darley, W. (2005) 'War Policy, Public Support, and the Media'. *Parameters*, **Summer 2005, pp. 124-131**
Access online

What has been the role and influence of the news media on public opinion and national policy? While critics have accused the media of editorial bias that undermines public support for military operations, several studies have shown that public opinion is not particularly influenced or swayed by media coverage of conflicts. The public has shown to consistently support conflicts engaged by the United States, which according to the author is due to nationalism.

Guides and manuals

Directorate-General for Research (2010). Communicating research for evidence-based policymaking: A practical guide for researchers in socio-economic sciences and humanities. Brussels: European Commission.
Access online

This guide instructs researchers on communicating their work in order to make an impact on policy making in the European Union. Researchers and policy makers must communicate with each other, and researchers have to make sure that policy relevant issues at the heart of their research are clearly defined and communicated. It also promotes two – way knowledge transfer in which dialogue is cultivated with the recipients of researchers' work, and instructs researchers on how to build a communications team, and on using web sites, interacting with the press, etc.

Mwesigye, P.G., Lugalambi, G.W., and Okao, J. (2008). Media Handbook for Development Researchers. Kampala: Panos East Africa.
Access online

This guide comprises a set of tools, resources and strategies to help development researchers establish continuous dialogue with the media in order to disseminate their research. Importance is placed upon the need for researchers to understand the roles, functions, opportunities and limitations that the media has in development and in public policy. It also suggests that researchers need a better understanding of journalistic values and media practices in order to turn her or his work into material that the media will find interesting and accessible for their audiences.

4. THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF RESEARCH INFLUENCE AND IMPACT

In the last ten years there has been an increasing emphasis on ensuring that research has an influence or 'impact' on policy. Research impact and research influence have therefore become key concerns for researchers and policy researchers engaged in the translation of research findings. It is also a major concern for funders of research, who increasingly require a demonstration of value for money (VFM) in order to communicate research worth to taxpayers or contributors. In order to assess influence, or impact, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms need to be in place in order to deliver real-time feedback on the uptake of research findings and – subsequently – the effect this has had on the policy process.

The literature tends not to distinguish clearly between research influence and research impact, with the two often being used interchangeably. This presents a significant problem, for the two - in theory – describe different things. Traditionally, impact refers to a one-off event; influence to a less tangible, continuous process. Often, research impact is understood in terms of the influence it has upon, for instance, policy or the academic community. In practice therefore, it is difficult to isolate influence from impact when discussing research and policy.

ODI's seminal guide to monitoring and evaluating policy research projects as an overall process identifies five areas of consideration (Hovland, 2007):
- Strategy and direction: The basic plan followed in order to reach intended goals – was the plan for a piece of communications work the right one?
- Management: The systems and processes are in place in order to ensure that the strategy can succeed – did the communications work go out on time and to the right people?
- Outputs: The tangible goods and services produced – is the work appropriate and of high quality?
- Uptake: Direct responses to the work – was the work shared or passed on to others
- Outcomes and impacts: Use of communications to make a change to behavior, knowledge, policy or practice – did communications work contribute to this change and how?

The following discussion looks at both research uptake, closely associated with assessing research communications, of which there is a burgeoning literature addressing the subject; and research outcomes and impacts in order to review the monitoring and evaluation of research influence and/or impact.

POLICY INFLUENCE

The literature on research influence and/or impact is part of a wider discussion concerning policy influence and its measurement (see Section 2.3; 4.2). There is a level of debate over whether influence can be demonstrated and different influences compared, though there have been attempts to guide researchers, civil society organizations, and governments in how to plan, monitor, and evaluate influencing strategies (Jones, 2011; DFID, 2010; Weyrauch et al,

2007). In discussing both how policy influence and research influence and/or impact can be measured, the literature identifies a number of problems:

- **Nature of policy**: Policy change is a highly complex, non-linear process, the results of which are uncertain due to the multitude of forces and actors involved in the policy process at any given time. This means it is extremely hard to both plan a set of activities based on a likely chain of events, and very difficult to 'trace' influences when reflecting back on policy change.
- **The attribution problem**: Determining the links between policy influencing activities and outputs, and changes in policy (variously defined) is complicated. Often, attribution will only be partial and changes will be the result of a number of factors.
- **Defining success**: 'Outright success' in terms of achieving the specific changes that were sought being rare, and some objectives modified or abandoned along the way – thus, objectives formulated at the outset of influencing work may not be the best yardstick against which to judge its progress if a logframe and baseline is constantly being re-worked.
- **Integration**: The monitoring and evaluation of influence requires monitoring and evaluation processes to be integrated within the life cycle of the project, resulting to additional work and the risk of complicating what is thought to be a 'simple' project.
- **Time frame**: Policy changes occur over long timeframes that may not be suitable to measurement within the 'usual' rhythms of projects and evaluations in aid agencies.
- **Resourcing**: Monitoring and evaluation is also time and resource intensive, and staff may lack the required know-how to plan and undertake such activities in conjunction with projects and programs, leading to objectives that are not readily monitored or evaluated.

RESEARCH UPTAKE

Previous sections have drawn attention to the 'communications turn' in research as researchers and funders seek new and innovative ways of presenting and disseminating research findings in order to achieve maximum influence by ensuring there is an adequate 'uptake' of research. Though this will also depend on research quality, organizational capacity, and financial resourcing, research uptake is here presented in terms of research communications.

While practitioners, policymakers, and researchers are adamant that research communication is central to research reaching policymakers and having an influence on policy, there are considerable doubts over current levels of capacity to monitor and evaluate current research communication efforts, and therefore limited opportunities for learning how to improve communications strategies In order to 'scale up' research impact, researchers need to be able to answer whether communicating their research is 'making a difference' (Perkins, 2006). The literature offers the following advice to researchers and research organizations engaged in research communications:

- Given growing donor concerns with how widely research is communicated (often as a proxy indicator of impact) it is worth ensuring that the communications 'reach' of research can be demonstrated through continuous, real-time monitoring against a plan;
- Space must be built within the project cycle to ensure that there is room for reflection and learning throughout the research communications process, with a degree of flexibility to allow for greater responsiveness (Bucher & Yaron, 2006);
- Technological tools offer a good opportunity to assess research communications in a way that considers the active engagement of the audience with the research being communicated, for instance the innovative use of Twitter (Scott, 2012, LSE, 2012);
- Other methods include Impact Logs, New areas for citation analysis, and User Surveys (Hovland, 2007);
- Clarity over which audiences research is being communicated to in order to measure uptake against planned targets (Perkins, 2006);
- Awareness that communication is often reduced to vertical information delivery or public relations, rather than part of a process of meaningful engagement in development processes, and thus approaches to measuring uptake can be limited in terms of assessing against overall strategic objectives (Lennie & Tacci, 2011);
- Further, sharing knowledge through research communications does not occur though the uploading and downloading of documents but rather how knowledge is used and whether its application leads to concrete development results (Clark & Cummings, 2011

EVALUATING RESEARCH INFLUENCE AND/OR IMPACT

Following insights garnered from the literature on research communication, the literature on research influence and/or impact is clear that evaluating research must move beyond considering issues relating to 'uptake' (e.g. citations). This type of influence and/or impact is often referred to in terms of 'academic impact' when uptake is limited to academic circles, and distinguished from what is thought to be a more nuanced consideration of 'external impacts', i.e. how research influences non-academic actors (LSE, 2011a). However this demarcation is more complex due to the seeming dichotomy created between 'academic research uptake' and 'non-academic policy influence'. In fact, research uptake may be high within policymakers, yet have little influence or impact on policy (see Section 2.3).

A number of perspectives and approaches on monitoring and evaluating research influence and/or impact can be identified in the literature, largely offering general guidance (related also to research communication) and possible tools. Key insights are as follows:

- There is no one "right" approach to advocacy evaluation, and some options fit certain advocacy efforts better than others, and different evaluation users will make different choices (Coffman, 2009)
- The same challenges associated with research communications, including the complexity of social change; difficulties in integrating a monitoring and evaluation system into a project cycle; the need for longitudinal studies rather than after-project evaluations which may not capture long-term influence or impacts (Hovland, 2007); and the importance of 'moving' Logframes;

- The need to define what research influence and/or impact looks like: usually this would entail the identification of objectives, but also includes an awareness of different types of policy change (see Section 2.3);
- Helpful tools to measure influence and/or impact include Outcome Mapping; RAPID Outcome Assessment; Most Significant Change; Innovation Histories; and Episode Studies (Hovland, 2007; Jones & Hearn, 2010);
- Case studies can also be an effective way of obtaining rich and complex information (Davies & Nutley, 2005); as are Participatory Rural Appraisals and Rural Appraisals, Developmental Evaluation, rights-based approach methodologies, contribution assessment, and Appreciative Inquiry (Lennie & Tacci, 2011);
- Monitoring and evaluation systems need to become more participatory, flexible and holistic in order to provide space for different types of knowledge and ongoing organizational and stakeholder learning and reflection. This does, however, go against dominant trends towards demonstrating impact rather than demonstrating learning (Lennie & Tacci, 2011).

VALUE FOR MONEY

Funders of research also have to consider research influence and/or impact and how this fits into their own strategic framework and objectives. Increasingly, funders seek a level of certainty that research they fund will be influential, leading to a perceived lack of innovation and funding of new partners, particularly in developing countries where the intellectual 'pool' is limited. Research funding is therefore hard to obtain, and would-be grantees are keen to stick to propose research projects likely to gain funding, often the expense of the kinds of research a country needs (see Section 1).

There is also an increased demand from funders for researchers to evaluate the influence and/or impact of their work in order to help public and private sector funding organizations, such as the IDRC, DFID, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, both assess their own contribution to change and justify their expenditures (Lindquist, 2001; McGann, 2006; DFID, 2005). Interestingly, South Africa are thought to have 'escaped' the need to demonstrate value for money to donors due to their national government's substantial investment in nationally-led research processes (Nakabugo, 2012)

The Value for Money agenda has received widespread criticism for monetarizing and instrumentalizing an endeavor that has been traditionally viewed as above financial weighting. In practice, calculating the value of research has proved problematic as approaches have tended to confuse value with impact rather than quality. However, the attempt to ensure grantees are more accountable to their funders; and funding bodies more accountable to their contributors has also been welcomed as a necessary, democratic development (Antinoja et al, 2011).

RESOURCES

Hovland, I. (2007). 'The M& E of Policy Research'. Working Paper 281. London: ODI.

This paper aims to advance understanding on how to monitor and evaluate policy research. While conventional academic research is usually evaluated using two approaches: academic peer review, and number of citations in peer-reviewed publications. For policy research programs, these evaluation tools have proven limited and do not capture the broader aims of policy research, such as policy impact, changes in behavior, or building of relationships. Policy research programs need new monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches in order to know whether they are making a difference, not only in the academic world but also in the world outside academia. In this review of approaches to monitoring and evaluating research impact (with a particular focus on research communication), Hovland distinguishes five cumulative levels of consideration:

1. **Strategy and direction**: The basic plan followed in order to reach intended goals – *was the plan for a piece of communications work the right one?*
2. **Management**: The systems and processes are in place in order to ensure that the strategy can succeed – *did the communications work go out on time and to the right people?*
3. **Outputs**: The tangible goods and services produced – *is the work appropriate and of high quality?*
4. *Uptake*: Direct responses to the work – *was the work shared or passed on to others*
5. **Outcomes and impacts**: Use of communications to make a change to behavior, knowledge, policy or practice – *did communications work contribute to this change and how?*

For each level a number of tools to help plan, monitor and evaluate each aspect of policy research are explained. In terms of uptake, the author suggests the adopting the following approaches: Impact Logs; New areas for citation analysis; and User Surveys. In terms of outcome and impact the following tools are offered: Outcome Mapping; RAPID Outcome Assessment; Most Significant Change; Innovation Histories; and Episode Studies.

Policy influence

Jones, H. (2011) 'A guide to monitoring and evaluating policy influence'. ODI Background Note. London: ODI.

Given that influencing policy is a central part of much international development work, including for donor agencies, there is a need to ensure that influencing work is properly monitored and evaluate in order for continued lesson learning and maximum effectiveness.
In the field of policy research this is a particular concern, and there is an increasing recognition that researchers need to engage with policy-makers and influence policy if their research is to be deemed to be of public worth. However monitoring policy change is not straightforward – it is a highly complex process shaped by various interacting forces and actors. In terms of specific challenges, it is difficult to determine the links between policy influencing activities and outputs, and changes in policy (variously defined). This 'attribution problem' is well-known within monitoring and evaluation theory and practice. Further, the nature of policy influencing work presents further challenges to more traditional M&E approaches, with 'Outright success' in terms of achieving the specific changes that were sought being rare, and some objectives modified or jettisoned along the way. This means that objectives formulated at the outset of influencing work may not be the best yardstick against

which to judge its progress. In addition, policy changes to occur over long timeframes that may not be suitable to measurement in the usual rhythms of projects and evaluations in aid agencies. Monitoring and evaluation is also time and resource intensive; and staff may lack the required know-how to plan and undertake such activities in conjunction with projects and programs, leading to objectives that are not readily monitored or evaluated. Jones highlights the importance of formulating a Theory of Change prior to an intervention in order to set a benchmark against which influencing activities can be monitored and their impact evaluated.

DFID (2010) 'HTN on How to plan an influencing approach to multilateral organizations'. London: DFID.
Access online

This How to Note for DFID staff, developed using the RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach (ROMA) heralded a concerted effort by DFID not only to take its influencing activities seriously, but also how they are monitored and evaluated through better planning. The step-by-step guide is briefly summarized as follows:
1. Define the objective of your influencing
2. Understand the policy context: policy spaces
3. Identify who you want to influence
4. Develop a theory of change
5. Analyzing power and influence of key actors
6. Mapping external relationships and team skills
7. Developing an activity plan
8. Monitoring and learning tools

In terms of Step 8, the most relevant to this discussion, the guidance note advises that there are different ways that you can monitor the success of your influencing approach by using the type of influencing activity you are undertaking as the basis for what information you will collect and review to monitor impact: evidence and advice based – trying to influence a multilateral through scientific evidence and advisory support – or lobbying and negotiation based – trying to influence a multilateral through attending meetings and diplomatic methods.; public campaigns and advocacy based – trying to influence a multilateral. Another way is to use progress markers, particularly useful for lobbying and negotiating type influencing activities. For both types of monitoring, it is important to agree how often you will review progress, and also to consider if monitoring will fit into your existing structures – for example using weekly team meetings – or whether it would be appropriate to organize (regular) review sessions, to assess progress more thoroughly.

Weyrauch, V., D´Agostino, J., & Richards (2011). 'Learners, practitioners, and teachers: handbook on monitoring, evaluating and managing knowledge for policy'. Buenos Aires: Fundación CIPPEC.
Access online
(In Spanish)

Based on reflections, work methodologies and practical tools, the aim of the handbook is to guide an organization from monitoring its practices to using knowledge to improve its performance. After identifying internal and external challenges and opportunities for Latin American (but also developing countries) think tanks in monitoring and evaluating their policy influence, the authors address why and how monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan

should be developed, and then offer a guide to creating a KM system resulting from M&E practices. Throughout these steps, communication is considered as a fundamental strategy to reach consensus with those who could affect or could be affected by the process of developing these practices. Finally, the handbook shares the experience of some organizations trying to take this road, a road that implies important organizational changes. One of the main assumptions of the handbook is that M&E need to be considered as an opportunity to promote and appreciate the learning process through the members of the organization's experience.

Lardone, Martín and Roggero, Marcos. Study on monitoring and evaluation of the research impact in the public policy of Policy Research Institutes (PRIs) in the region. CIPPEC and GDNet.
Access online (English version)
Access online (Spanish version)

The general aim of our study is to analyze the current state of policy research institutes' capacities to monitor and evaluate (M&E) their actions of impact on public policy, and also to identify the M&E impact mechanisms currently available. Authors hope to identify those factors which facilitate or obstruct the capacity of PRIs to monitor and evaluate their influence on public policy. To do so, they pose a series of questions: How do PRIs monitor and evaluate the impact of the research they carry out on public policy? How do they measure the influence of the knowledge and evidence they produce in shaping and implementing public policy? Which relevant methodologies does this type of organization have at its disposal to follow up and evaluate impact on public policy? What are the current capacities of the PRIs involved in the field?

Coffman, J. (2009). 'Overview of current evaluation practice'. Center for Evaluation Innovation.
Access online

There is no one "right" approach to advocacy evaluation. Some options fit certain advocacy efforts better than others, and different evaluation users will make different choices. This brief offers an overview of current practice in the rapidly growing field of advocacy evaluation. It highlights the kinds of approaches being used, offers specific examples of how they are being used and who is using them, and identifies the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. The brief addresses four key evaluation design questions and then offers common advocacy evaluation responses to those questions: 1) Who will do the evaluation? 2) What will the evaluation measure? 3) When will the evaluation take place? 4) What methodology will the evaluation use?

Coffman, J. (2009). 'A user's guide to advocacy evaluation planning'. Harvard Family Research Project. Cambridge, M.A: Harvard University
Access online

The guide was developed for advocates, evaluators, and funders who want guidance on how to evaluate advocacy and policy change efforts. This tool takes users through four basic steps that generate the core elements of an advocacy evaluation plan, including what will be measured and how. The tool helps users to: 1) identify how the evaluation will be used and who will use it to ensure the evaluation delivers the right kind of information when it is

needed, 2) map the strategy being evaluated to illustrate how activities lead to policy-related outcomes, 3) prioritize the components that are most essential for the evaluation to make sure the evaluation is resource-efficient and manageable and 4) identify measures and methods that signal whether advocacy strategy elements have been successfully implemented or achieved. Because most users want help determining which outcomes and methods are most relevant or appropriate in an advocacy and policy context, the tool includes a comprehensive list of outcomes, measures, and methods that users can choose from when developing their own evaluation plans.

Organizational Research Services (2007). A guide to measuring advocacy and policy
Access online

The overall purpose of this guide is twofold. To help grantmakers think about and talk about measurement of advocacy and policy, this guide puts forth a framework for naming outcomes associated with advocacy and policy work as well as directions for evaluation design. The framework is intended to provide a common way to identify and talk about outcomes, providing philanthropic and non-profit audiences an opportunity to react to, refine and adopt the outcome categories presented. In addition, grantmakers can consider some key directions for evaluation design that include a broad range of methodologies, intensities, audiences, timeframes and purposes.

Riesman, J., Gienapp, A., and Stachowiak, S. (2007). 'A handbook of data collection tools: companion to "A guide to measuring advocacy and policy"'. Seattle: Organizational Research Services
Access online

This handbook is dedicated to providing examples of practical tools and processes for collecting useful information from policy and advocacy efforts. These examples are actual or modified tools used for evaluating existing campaigns or related efforts. Authors aimed to identify a wide range of data collection methods rather than rely primarily on traditional pre/post surveys and wide opinion polling. When possible, they included innovative applications of tools or methods to provide a broad range of options for grantees and funders. They primarily identified sample tools to measure the core outcome areas related to social change or policy change. For each outcome area, readers will find several data collection options as well as relevant methodological notes on ways to implement or adapt particular methods. In addition, the handbook offers examples of tools and methods related to other types of evaluation design.

Devlin-Foltz, D., Fagen, M.C., Reed, E., Medina, R., Neiger, B.L., (2012) 'Advocacy Evaluation: Challenges and Emerging Trends'. *Health Promotion Practice*, Vol. 13, No. 5 581–586
Request online

Devising, promoting, and implementing changes in policies and regulations are important components of population-level health promotion. Whether advocating for changes in school meal nutrition standards or restrictions on secondhand smoke, policy change can create environments conducive to healthier choices. Such policy changes often result from complex advocacy efforts that do not lend themselves to traditional evaluation approaches. In a challenging fiscal environment, allocating scarce resources to policy advocacy may be

particularly difficult. A well-designed evaluation that moves beyond inventorying advocacy activities can help make the case for funding advocacy and policy change efforts. Although it is one thing to catalog meetings held, position papers drafted, and pamphlets distributed, it is quite another to demonstrate that these outputs resulted in useful policy change outcomes. This is where the emerging field of advocacy evaluation fits in by assessing (among other things) strategic learning, capacity building, and community organizing. Based on recent developments, this article highlights several challenges advocacy evaluators are currently facing and provides new resources for addressing them.

Research uptake

Mendizabal, E. (2013). 'Research Uptake: what is it and can it be measured?'. *Onthinktanks* blogpost. January 21st 2013.
Access online

What is meant by 'research uptake', and how is it measured? Reflecting on the author's experiences and involvement in current discussions, the article argues that too much emphasis is being placed on 'uptake' rather than research quality While making a number of important points the author also described research funders as concurrently not taking research impact seriously *enough*: the rate of return in aid-funded research is largely thought about after the research has taken place and the money has been spent. Such large investments, Mendizabal argues, would be subject to unparalleled levels of scrutiny and information-gathering prior to the release of funds in a private sector context. In addition to this point the article also problematizes the concept of 'uptake', and instead suggests that: a) research uptake could be better described as 'sidetake' in many cases, where instead of flowing 'up' to policymakers research flows to other researchers; and b) that the notion of 'downtake' is also applicable when describing research aimed not at policymakers but the public. Thus, the author assumed that 'uptake' refers to the transferal and use of knowledge from researchers to policymakers. Uptake is opportunistic and often a matter of luck, and thus not the best way to assess the 'rate of return' on a research investment. Quality, the author argues, needs to be given price of place in the evaluation of research influence and impact.

Butcher, C. and Yaron, G. (2006), 'Scoping study: Monitoring and Evaluation of Research Communications'. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies
Access online

In this study key approaches and methods used in research communication are shared, highlighting the role of a variety of face-to-face and technology-based ways of gleaning information about what works with regard to evaluating programmes and then disseminating research - and why. One element concerns the centrality, within recent approaches to M&E, of the participatory development of indicators - either quantitative or qualitative. Also, based on the findings, the authors suggest that implementers of research communication projects or programmes collect better baseline data, carry out regular monitoring as well as evaluation, undertake more strenuous identification of audiences and pathways for the communication of research, and build space for reflection and learning throughout the project cycle. Finally, the authors emphasize the importance of establishing a relationship with those that the research is intended to benefit, focusing on the following elements: potential users are more likely to use the research if the research (and source of research) is trusted; research is more likely to

be assimilated if it comes through routes that people are familiar with; and the influence of research findings is likely to be cumulative and needs to be built up over time.

Perkins, N. (2006), 'Proving our worth: developing capacity for the monitoring and evaluation of communicating research in development', Research Communication Monitoring and Evaluation Group Programme Summary Report.
Access online

This programme report presents the results of a workshop in which an informal network composed of representatives from a number of UK organizations concerned about the impact of research on the reality of poverty discussed how to explore and analyze the different models for monitoring and evaluating research communication. Supported by DFID, the workshop aimed to find ways to integrate monitoring and evaluation processes into the lifespan of a research project. The discussion was a result of the Central Research Department at DFID has prioritizing communication as a cross-cutting theme within the institution's research and policy divisions. 'Scaling up' the impact of research, however, is tempered by significant gaps in the capacity to develop, monitor and assess communication strategies for research. Herein lays a challenge for the research community – 'to know if it's making a difference'. Participants in the workshop emphasized five critical areas which need to be considered in the future: the collection of better baseline data; engaging in dialogues that inform strategies; regular collection of monitoring data, not just evaluations; a greater identification of audiences and pathways for the communication of research; and the need to build space for reflection and learning throughout the project cycle.

Lennie, J., and Tacchi, J. (2011). 'United Nations Inter-agency Resource Pack on Research, Monitoring and Evaluation in Communication for Development'. New York: United Nations.
Access online

This report highlights a number of trends, challenges and approaches associated with researching, monitoring and evaluating Communication for Development within the UN context. Regarding the approaches, methodologies and methods, findings highlight the need for a more flexible approach in selecting and using R, M&E approaches, methodologies and methods; the value and importance of a participatory approach, the benefits of a mixed methods approach; and the importance of using approaches and methodologies that consider the wider context and structural issues. The authors identify a number of challenges in the monitoring and evaluation of Communication for Development, including the concern that communication, as understood by decision-makers, is often reduced to vertical information delivery or public relations, rather than part of a process of meaningful engagement in development processes, despite communications being heralded as a major pillar of participatory development.

Clark, L. and Cummings, S. (2011). 'Is it actually possible to measure knowledge sharing?' *Knowledge Management for Development Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 238-247
Access online

This document describes a discussion that took place within the KM4Dev community, which covered a wide range of topics: knowledge sharing and behavioural change, complexity theory, subjectivity and possible indicators, and the nature and value of scientific exploration. One of the main conclusions of the discussion was that sharing knowledge does not occur though the uploading and downloading of documents but rather it is how knowledge is used and whether its application leads to concrete development results. The article also goes through the dilemma of understanding knowledge as a product or output that we can count, and the behaviour change resulting from application of new knowledge (which is a process and therefore much harder to measure). Moreover, it sets that it is not just about knowing more but using the knowledge to do things differently and that we not only need to think about the data we need to collect to prove our contribution to behaviour change but what we plan to do with the data and how we aggregate indicators to turn data into compelling evidence. Finally, the authors argue that we need to accept that what works in one context or situation is not necessarily suitable or advisable in another, so we need to embrace both the complex and context-specific nature of our work and be prepared to adapt to our circumstances.

Scott, N. (2012) 'A pragmatic guide to monitoring and evaluating research communications using digital tools'. Onthinktanks blogpost, January 6th 2012.
Access online

Measuring the success of an individual or organization is difficult, as there are a number of conceptual, technical and practical challenges to finding evidence. So how can the dissemination of research be measured? Nick Scott has created a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) dashboard to track how outputs fare (for the author's organization, the Overseas Development Institute). This dashboard would be able to assess success in reaching and influencing audiences and identifying what actors lead to that success. Lessons learned during the process is that organizations should only measure what they can measure, and to not let measuring get in the way of a communications strategy. For example, counting web site visits might not be a reliable way to evaluate research impact.

Brown, A. (2012) 'Proving dissemination is only one half of your impact story: Twitter provides proof of real-time engagement with the public', Blog Impact of Social Sciences. London: London School of Economics
Access online

The article explains how to use Twitter to monitor real time responses, in order to assess the effect on a public community. Twitter is extremely valuable as a way of assessing individual responses to broadcast media; in order to harness such reactions; real time monitoring seems to be the best option.

DFID (2007). 'Lessons Learnt in Research Communication: Monitoring and Evaluation and Capacity Development'. Report of a lesson-learning workshop. London: DFID.
Access online

This is a report of a research communications lesson sharing workshop, organised by DFID's Central Research. General discussions around research communication raised two critical points: the need to develop a framework that integrates research, communication and

development values, to allow a common purpose; and the need for a shared vision of purpose between researchers and those whose primary role is communication, when developing and implementing a communication strategy.

Brody, T. (2006). 'Evaluating Research Impact through Open Access to Scholarly Communication'. Southampton: University of Southampton.
Access online

This thesis concludes that open access provides wider dissemination and distribution possibilities to those research articles posted on open access pages and maximizes impact as more people can read them sooner. Citations are also more frequent and can be used as a new web metric that measures download impact.

Research impact

London School of Economics (2011a) 'A beginner's guide to the different types of impact: why the traditional 'bean-counting' approach is no longer useful in the digital era', Blog Impact of Social Sciences. London: London School of Economics.
Access online

How do we define one type of impact from another? The article takes a closer look at the differences between academic impact and external impact, a step away from the traditional passive approach to making impact and towards a digital era solution. Far from 'maximal views' of impacts, that tend to see it as 'the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy' (Research Council UK), the article proposes a 'minimal view' of impacts as recorded or otherwise auditable occasions of influence from academic research on another actor or organization. If impact is usually demonstrated by pointing to a record of the active consultation, consideration, citation, discussion, referencing or use of a piece of research, in the modern period this is most easily or widely captured as some form of 'digital footprint'. The author also differentiates research 'academic impact' (when the influence is upon another researcher, university organization or actor) 'external impact' (when an auditable influence is achieved upon a non-academic organization or actor in a sector outside the university sector itself).

London School of Economics (2011b) 'Impact is a strong weapon for making an evidence-based case for enhanced research support but a state-of-the-art approach to measurement is needed', Blog Impact of Social Sciences. London: London School of Economics.
Access full text online

What, precisely, is research 'impact'? What is the best way to demonstrate it? And what does 'impact' entail for the social sciences? The article presents two approaches or frameworks to assess research impact: the 'Payback Framework' and the 'SIAMPI' approach. The author argues that 'impact' need not be conceived of in purely economic terms: it can embody broader public value in the form of social, cultural, environmental AND economic benefits; metrics-only approaches are behind the times: robust 'state of the art' evaluations combine narratives with relevant qualitative and quantitative indicators; rather than being the height

of philistinism, 'impact' is a strong weapon for making an evidence-based case to governments for enhanced research support; the 'state of the art' is suited to the characteristics of all research fields in their own term; there should be no disincentive for conducting 'basic' or curiosity-driven research: assessment should be optional and rewarded from a sizeable tranche of money separate from quality-related funds.

Davies, H., Nutley, S., and Walter, I. (2005) 'Approaches to assessing the non-academic impact of social science research'. Report of the ESRC symposium on assessing the non-academic impact of research 12th/13th May 2005.
Access online

This report summarizes the findings of an ESRC symposium on assessing the non-academic impact of research. It lays out the reasons why we might want to examine the difference that research can make. It then explores different ways of approaching this problem, outlining the core issues and choices that arise when seeking to assess research impact. The report suggest that impact assessment may be undertaken for one or more of the following main purposes: accountability, value for money, learning, or auditing evidence-based policy and practice. Three key messages from the symposium were that: (1) approaches to assessing impact need to be purposeful, pragmatic and cognizant of the complexities involved; (2) comprehensive impact assessment of an entire portfolio of research is often impractical for timing and cost reasons; (3) impact assessment may need to focus on some key case studies and use an expert panel to provide an informed opinion about the overall impact of a research programme or funding agency. Finally, authors conclude that no single model or approach to assessing non-academic research impact is likely to suffice. Instead, the appropriateness of the impact assessment approach will be a function of many factors including, inter alia: the purpose of the assessment; the nature of the research; the context of the setting; and the types of impact of key interest.

Beardon, H. and Newman, K., 2009. How wide are the ripples?' IKM Emergent Working paper No. 7. Bonn: Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) Emergent Research Programme, European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI).
Access online

Based on different case studies, this paper explores how widely the information generated through participatory processes, especially at grassroots level, is recognized and used. The authors found a distinct lack of actual policies and procedures for strengthening and broadening the use of information generated through participatory processes in international development organizations. However, they found that some of the fundamental questions, such as: What could this type of information be used for? Who should be using it, or paying it attention? How could it be stored, packaged or disseminated in order to have more influence? were in practice rarely being asked, let alone answered.

Donovan, C. and Hanney, S., 2011, 'The 'Payback Framework' explained', *Research Evaluation*, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 181-183
Access online

The Payback Framework, originally developed to examine the 'impact' or 'payback' of health services research, is explained. The Payback Framework is a research tool used to facilitate data collection and cross-case analysis by providing a common structure and so ensuring cognate information is recorded. It consists of a logic model representation of the complete research process, and a series of categories to classify the individual paybacks from research. Its multi-dimensional categorization of benefits from research starts with more traditional academic benefits of knowledge production and research capacity building, and then extends to wider benefits to society.

Jones, H., and Hearn, S. (2009) 'Outcome Mapping: A realistic alternative for planning, monitoring and evaluation'. ODI Background Note. London: ODI
Access online

Outcome Mapping (OM) is an approach to planning, monitoring, and evaluating social change initiatives developed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada. At a practical level, OM is a set of tools and guidelines that steer project or programme teams through an iterative process to identify their desired change and to work collaboratively to bring it about. Results are measured by the changes in behavior, actions and relationships of those individuals, groups or organizations with whom the initiative is working directly and seeking to influence. This paper reviews OM principles to guide donors considering support for projects using OM, and other decision-makers seeking methods to improve the effectiveness of aid policies and practice. It asks: 1. What makes OM unique and of value? 2. For which programs, projects, contexts and change processes is it most useful? 3. How can donors facilitate its use, and what are the potential barriers?

Pellini, A., Anderson, J. H., Thi Lan Tran, H., and Irvine, R. (2012) 'Assessing the policy influence of research: A case study of governance research in Viet Nam'. ODI Background Note. London: ODI.
Access online

This Background Note describes a case study of one attempt to assess the impact of a knowledge product: The Vietnam Development Report 2010 – Modern Institutions (VDR 2010). The authors set that the assessment of the policy influence of research products requires a familiarity with different definitions of policy change, different approaches for policy influences, and the knowledge of processes and tools to assess research outputs, the process for producing them, and their policy outcomes and impact. Assessments could also include capacity development as part of the assessment project of the local research institute. Finally, they share some specific lessons: a policy influence assessment should be part of the plan for producing and communicating research outputs, citation analysis requires time and has to be seen as a complement to the qualitative analysis of uptake and influence, external assessments should complement the internal self-assessment, it is difficult to develop stories of change from a single research output, especially after short periods of time, and a longer time frame is needed to assess the impact of such studies on institutional change. To conclude, the authors argue that the experience with the Assessment of the VDR 2010 shows that policy influencing programs have to take a long view – one that sees policy influence assessments as part of the policy influencing process.

Assessing value for money in research

Lindquist, E.A. (2001) 'Discerning Policy Influence: Framework for a Strategic Evaluation of IDRC-Supported Research'. Ottawa: IDRC.
Access online

This document was produced to help IDRC assess how the research it supports has influenced policy processes. In terms of how policy influence is understood this paper provides three key approaches: i) Expanding Policy Capacities: Research can have influence by improving knowledge and supporting the development of innovative ideas, lines of thought and questions, as well as supporting actors to communicate ideas; ii) Broadening Policy Horizons: Research can provide opportunities for networking/learning , frame debates with new concepts and stimulating public debate and quiet dialogue between policymakers, and helping researchers to adopt a broader understanding of issues; and iii) Affecting Policy Regimes through modification of existing policies and programs or their redesign.

McGann, J. (2006). 'Best Practices for Funding and Evaluating Think Tanks'. Prepared for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Ambler: McGann Associates.
Access online

The study documents and analyzes the existing pre-grant assessment criteria, methods of grant monitoring and evaluation, and effective funding mechanisms for think tanks in developing and transitional countries. It reveals that pre-grant assessment is most effective when three levels of evaluation are employed: (1) Country Assessment; (2) Policy and NGO Assessment; and (3) Institutional Assessment. Further, grant monitoring and evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive when two levels of assessment are utilized: (1) Output Evaluation (involving activities and dissemination, and quality and policy relevance); and (2) Impact Evaluation (involving organizational impact evaluation, and policy impact evaluation). Moreover, the report identifies recommended best practices in pre-grant assessment and grant monitoring and evaluation.

Antinoja, E., Eskiocak, O., Kjennerud, M., Rozenkopf, I., Schatz, F. (2011). 'Value for Money: Current Approaches and Evolving Debates'. London: London School of Economics.
Access online

Who are non-governmental organizations providing value to – donors, taxpayers, or beneficiaries? Who defines value? And who should define value? This report argues that while stakeholders' definitions of Value for Money differ, a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness seems to be at its core, complemented with good business practices, Option Appraisal and participation. To a large extent, Value for Money is about the long-standing ambitions of improving existing systems, optimal use of resources, and continuous capacity building and learning. It also sets that current discussions on Value for Money seem to have a strong focus on increasing accountability to donors rather than beneficiaries, but both from an effectiveness and ethical perspective, participation of beneficiaries needs to play a role both in defining and measuring Value for Money. This report identifies a number of important dimensions and proposes a simplified framework to assess potential techniques for measuring Value for Money. According to this framework, measurement techniques differ mainly in their ability to measure what matters, to measure comparably, and to measure contribution.

DFID (2005) 'Rate of return of research: A literature review and critique'. London: DFID.
Access online

The study investigates what is known about rates of return to research and assesses key evidence that has been presented on agricultural and health research in particular. General findings suggest that: there is a robust positive relationship between spending on research and development and economic growth; the social return is significantly higher than the private return, suggesting that research and development will be under-funded if left to the market and highlighting the role of the public sector in this area; though research and development predominantly occurs in advanced market economies, there are significant spillovers from developed countries to developing countries via international trade. Finally, the study share recommendations to organizations, governments and donors involved in agriculture and health research.

Nakabugo, M. G., (2012) 'Donors and 'Value for Money' Impositions: South Africa's Exceptionalism in Research Development and International Cooperation in Higher Education', in *NORRAG NEWS*, Value for Money in International Education: A New World of Results, Impacts and Outcomes, No.47, April 2012, pp. 102-103
Access online

This article argues that South Africa's massive investment in research development puts it in the position where it is able to decide on its own research agenda and Value for Money measures without much external interference of donors. It is this same spirit of ownership that it seems to nurture as an emerging donor in its recent international cooperation programs with other universities and institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

5. CAPACITY BUILDING

In this section:

- Approaches to developing research capacity & evidence literacy/use of evidence in policymaking
- Developing policy influence capacity

5.1 APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING RESEARCH CAPACITY & EVIDENCE LITERACY/USE OF EVIDENCE IN POLICYMAKING

The literature in the area of capacity building to strengthen research and policy linkages refers to a number of different types of capacity; for instance, research generation (e.g. universities, education systems, institutional weakness of think tanks), research use (e.g. low demand for research amongst policymakers), and understanding of research (e.g. the general public discourse, level policy debate). Capacity building interventions and the discussion surrounding them therefore address varying entry points in accordance with the identified problem, targeting academic, public sector and NGO actors, as well as designing intervention that act on an individual, organizational and public discursive level.

Assessing capacity to generate and use evidence

There is wide agreement across the literature that research capacity (particularly in the social sciences) is weak (Krishna & Krishna, 2010), and that this is a hindrance to policymaking; and further, that it is essential to formulate more rigorous diagnostic tools prior to undertaking capacity-building initiatives (Nath, 2011).

What affects capacity to undertake, use, and understand research? The literature points to a number of exogenous and endogenous factors affecting, for instance, the strength of the higher education sector and investments in particular areas of research. In their comparative report on the state of social sciences in Asia, Krishna & Krishna (2010) argue that the relative success of India in this regard is due to its vast technological and institutional infrastructure, which has facilitated the growth of research centres and university departments, as well as ensuring sufficient publication networks for researchers to both disseminate their work and access information. In contrast to science and technology the social sciences are thought to have been overlooked in terms of research funding, to the detriment of public policy design and implementation (PASGR, 2010; British Academy & Association for Commonwealth Universities, 2009).

Broadbent (2012) points to cultural factors relating to the pursuit of knowledge in African contexts, including the existence of disincentives which discourage the use of 'evidence' for fear of seeming 'un-African'; as well as to the way in which the ill-defined discourse governing international development discussions effectively 'deskill' participants in developing countries by providing a set of concepts, ideas, and narratives that can often be used without critique. Further, according to a UNESCO report in 2006 which assessed research capacity amongst higher education, the data shows that in terms of personnel engaged in research, Africa has the lowest research capacity in the world. The report recommends that Africa's reliance on external funding from donors has become an impediment to building research capacity, recommending that additional investment needs to be made by national governments and - potentially – the private sector (Sanyal & Varghese, 2006).

Given that research capacity is an ill-defined area which could refer to different skills amongst different actors, blueprints for assessing research capacity across these different contexts are not available. However there are examples of attempts to measure research capacity in particular areas. One approach is to assess higher education. As indicated, UNESCO focuses upon research personnel in higher education establishments as well as enrolment numbers (Sanyal & Varghese, 2006). A similar attempt by UNESCO to develop a framework for assessing higher education capacity is presented in in Meek & van der Lee (2005) as a way of offering guidance in the development of research capacity benchmarks in Asia and the Pacific. Both consider the capacity of policymakers to use and understand research, developing and testing an 'evidence literacy' diagnostic tool (Nath, 2011) and using a questionnaire to ascertain how policymakers use research (Uneke et al, 2010).).

Approaches to capacity building

Capacity building can take place at different levels, though there is an increasing emphasis on the need to adopt a systemic, organization-level approach to capacity building (Buldioski, 2012). Pound and Adolph (2005) present a general framework for approaching the building of capacity at organizational level, including steps to monitor the external environment;

review the organization's strategy; identify capacity needs and plan for the development of this capacity; negotiate external support; implement the capacity development process; and monitor and evaluate the progress made in building capacity. In recent years there have been two key shifts in apparoach: i)from a focus on building the capacity of research producers to a focus on building the capacity of research users; ii) from targeting of individuals to a more holistic, organizational approach.

However approaches to building research capacity in terms of generation, understanding and use will differ in accordance with the political context, resources available, and specific nature of an intervention's objective, with approaches often approaches based on what is thought to be an issue relating to the supply of research, its demand, or the sharing or brokering of knowledge. Entry points identified in the literature include:

- Stimulating 'demand' for research amongst policymakers ([Newman et al, 2012](#)) and improving 'evidence literacy' ([Nath, 2011](#)).
- Improving research quality through investments in higher education ([British Academy & Association for Commonwealth Universities, 2009](#)) ([Mendizabal, 2013](#)) [Broadbent (2012)](#), the provision of grants to researchers ([Buldioski, 2012](#)), as well as a number of other approaches which include mentoring, learning alliances, write-shops, exchange programmes and scholarships, north-south twinning arrangements, and south-south partnerships ([Pound & Adolph, 2005](#)).
- Developing knowledge-sharing networks across a variety of research actors ([Majanovic, 2012](#); [Jones et al, 2007](#)).

A further set of skills to be developed is concerned with research uptake – how research is communicated, and with what impact (see Section 5.2).

Lessons learned in capacity building

Lesson-learning in this area is constrained by a lack of evidence with regards to 'what works' across the various entry points identified, with monitoring and evaluation systems being weak or undocumented ([Jones et al, 2007](#); [Newman et al, 2012](#)). When they do exist, monitoring and evaluation processes tend to focus on short-term outputs and clearly visible changes rather than subtle, more nuanced improvements in capacity ([Ortiz & Taylor, 2010](#)). In an ODI assessment of research capacity strengthening in Africa the authors concluded that improved monitoring and evaluation was essential if donors and national government were to make a concerted –an harmonised– attempt to build research capacity in Africa and elsewhere. However, the report does note that the following positive impacts are reflected: stronger North-South partnerships had been forged; dissemination of research papers had been widespread; increased enrolment rates in local MA and PhD programmes; improved research administration and research management capacities; and improved research quality and researcher skills.

The shift to organization-level approaches reflects the realisation that often capacity building initiatives generally tend to avoid tackling problems relating to weak or absent knowledge systems and institutional weakness, and instead focus on less-effective workshops and the training of individuals ([Jones et al, 2007](#); [Broadbent, 2012](#)) [Buldioski, 2012](#)). Further, capacity support can only be provided by donors if organizations are both willing to change and understand why their capacity needs to be improved ([Buldioski, 2012](#)).

RAPID's reflections on its own capacity-building work also indicates the need to ensure organizations that receive support are well targeted: often the group followed 'demand' and thus ended up working with organizations with very little research capacity or interest. It was found that in 'donor-rich' contexts where there is little competition for funds, organizations have found the kinds of competencies and skills offered by RAPID less appealing than those working in more competitive funding environments such as Latin America and Southeast Asia. Thus, donors need to be careful that demand for capacity building does not only come from themselves (Mendizabal et al, 2011).

Research use amongst donors

Concerns over the capacity of donor personnel to use and understand research are also present, with evidence from DFID and the World Bank indicating that the use of knowledge within donor organizations needs to be prioritised as much as that of its partners and stakeholders. In the case of DFID, Jones and Mendizabal (2010) recommend that human resourcing undergoes a rethinks due to a need to 'raise the bar' in terms of the capacity of advisors to understand and use research to inform their decisions; while a World Bank study on demand for research concludes that building 'capacity' to demand research entails creating stronger incentives for learning and more relevant and accessible research products (Ravallion, 2012).

Resources

Research capacity

Krishna, V., and Krishna U., (2010) *Social Sciences in South Asia*. **2010 World Social Science Report - Knowledge Divides Background paper. Paris: UNESCO.**
Access online

Addressing the social sciences, this background paper examines South Asia's research capacity. While the post-war period has witnessed a moderate growth in the number of universities, specialized research institutions, private bodies, governmental and non-governmental organizations conducting Social Science Research (SSR) in South Asia, the social sciences' expansion has followed a different trajectory in the various countries in the region. The authors argue that these variations can be explained by a number of factors, including the size of the country, the historical context of both the colonial and post-colonial eras shaping the emergence and development of these countries, the nature of their political regimes and difference in their other socio-economic-religious and cultural factors. Currently, India dominates given its vast infrastructure and large pool of intellectual capital, while in there are serious concerns that in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka social scientists only teach and do not undertake any research. The paper warns of an 'intellectual and institutional crisis' in South Asian social sciences in contrast to investments being made in science and technology.

Sanyal, B.C., and Varghese, N.V. (2006). 'Research Capacity of the Higher Education Sector in Developing Countries'. Paris: UNESCO.
Access online

Based on the available sources of information, this paper argues that the knowledge divide is deep and is heavily tilted in favor of developed countries. Developing countries suffer from a lack of both financial and human resources in R&D and need to improve their capacity to produce knowledge domestically as well as to absorb knowledge produced elsewhere. In particular, there is a need for reviving and strengthening the university system in developing countries to strengthen their research capacities. This change should be reflected in resource allocation to higher education and research, and in the provision of opportunities to expand graduate programs and improve female participation rates. Currently, there is a huge disparity between researchers per country: in Finland there are 7,992 researchers per million inhabitants stays at the one end of the spectrum while Burkina Faso has 17 and The Republic of Congo has 30. Overall the data shows that in terms of personnel engaged in research, Africa has the lowest research capacity and North America and Europe have the highest. Further, data on the enrolment in institutions of tertiary education indicates that regional enrolment rates vary widely. The world average was 24 per cent participation in higher education in 2004 (the highest being in North America and Western Europe at 70 per cent) in some countries in Africa the rate was 1 per cent in countries such as Burkina Faso and Tanzania etc. Instead of relying on bilateral and multilateral aid to fund research, as countries such as Uganda do, investments must be made in higher education and research, the paper argues, with the private sector having a potentially pivotal role to play in this regard.

Broadbent, E. (2012) 'The Politics of Research Uptake: Synthesis of Case Study Findings'. London: EBPDN/Mwananchi
Access online

In this paper the author argues that a more comprehensive attempt at assessing current capacity to undertake, understand, and use research in Africa is required if capacity is to be built. Based on the premise that policy debates provide a 'window' into the way a society thinks and speaks, the findings of this four country study indicate that levels of capacity are often not thought to be low due to a lack of understanding of what it means to possess 'capacity' in the area of evidence and/or research. Further, the author argues that capacity building initiatives must focus upon the philosophy of science, critical thinking as a methodological approach, and research methodologies within higher level curricula. Importantly, there is a wide gap between reported capacity to use evidence – particularly amongst policymakers – and actual capacity. Further, incentives not to build one's capacity exist in Africa: the 'instrumentalization' of lack of capacity can be extremely beneficial; particularly for those resisting reform, for it can stall a policy discussion. Cultural labels relating to what is 'African' and what is 'white' can also create an incentive to eschew research, evidence, and the written word.
Assessing capacity

Nath, C. (2011). 'Use of scientific and technological evidence within the Parliament of Uganda'. London: INASP/Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology.
Access online

In 2008 the UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) and the Parliament of Uganda began collaborating in order to strengthen the Parliament of Uganda's handling of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). Participants decided prior to the progamme's commencement that a baseline study was needed in order to gather information on how

effectively the Parliament of Uganda currently handles STI. The study's approach has forged a path into the study of 'evidence literacy' in capacity building programmes. Overall, the study found that MPs have low levels of scientific literacy, although the majority still consider themselves 'well informed'. Further, MPs find it difficult to distinguish reliable scientific evidence from unreliable evidence and knowledge sharing is weak. In terms of the Parliamentary Research Service, staff have limited access to information on science and technology and the Parliamentary Library stocks limited resources. Researchers also have poor links with the STI community and need to improve their information literacy skills. The study recommended that training is conducted for MPs on information literacy and scientific method; for clerks in effective report writing; and for research staff on information literacy, summarising skills and science communication.

Uneke, C.J., Ezeoha, A.E., Ndukwe, C.D., Oyibo, P.G., Onwe, F., Igbinedion, E.B., and Chukwu, P.N. (2010). 'Operational Manual for Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Employ Evidence in Health Policymaking for Developing Countries: The Nigeria Experience'. Geneva: World Health Organization.
Access online

As part of the WHO's Health Policy and Systems Research Project which aimed to form a baseline on the use of health policy and systems evidence in terms of both challenges associated with its use and current capacity issues this paper an operational manual based on Nigeria's experience of implementing the project. The project's intervention areas include individual capacity strengthening, strengthening of skills to develop research initiatives, to build an enabling environment for evidence use, including the use of incentives. In order to assess capacity levels the project adopted the following methodology: i) Structured pre-tested questionnaire including questions on level of health systems research that the health ministry is engaged in, formal/official collaboration, informal/unofficial collaboration, key activities/objectives of the health ministry in terms of health policy and systems research and use of evidence in policy making, key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the health ministry in HPSR and use of evidence in policy making, level of staff awareness of HPSR and use of evidence in policy making, computer literacy and skills in the use of information technology pertaining to health policy and evidence use; ii) Key informant interviews of a selected number of individuals in the target group, conducted face-to-face or by telephone using an interview guide; and iii) Focus group discussions 9-12 persons among the target group conducted with a moderator or two co-moderators using a discussion guide that centred on HPSR and use of evidence in policy making. The manual contains a number of templates to be used for capacity assessment in this area.

Lynn Meek, V. and van der Lee, J.J. (2005) 'Performance Indicators for Assessing and Benchmarking Research Capacities in Universities'. Background Paper prepared for the Global University Network for Innovation – Asia and the Pacific. Bangkok: UNESCO.
Access online

This paper is a step towards producing a regional benchmarking policy for university research capacity building in Asia and the Pacific. The paper was commissioned specifically to: i) assess the quality of research programmes in a university (including impact of research; sustainability of research; importance of research; potential of research); and ii) enabling a

university to benchmark its research capacity with other universities found in the country/region for the purpose of ranking/rating the universities in terms of their research capacity/performance. The paper therefore offers general guidance in developing a benchmarking framework, though it does not provide a set of benchmarking indicators due to the varying contexts in which they will be applied.

Ortiz, A. and Taylor, P., 'Learning purposefully in capacity development Why, what and when to measure?', Brighton: Institute of Development Studies
Access online

Many capacity development processes aim at long-term sustainable change, which depends on seeing many smaller changes in what are often intangible fields (rules, incentives, behaviors, power, coordination etc.). Yet, M&E processes of capacity development tend to focus on short-term outputs and clearly visible changes. This paper offers some ideas on how to deal with this paradox by delving into what capacity development elements M&E can and should be able to measure. This, the authors set, depends on whether capacity development is considered a means or an end. The paper explores predominant ways of thinking about M&E, and discusses whether these are able to grasp the unique nature of M&E of capacity development. M&E should be able to measure how capacity development contributes to wider development processes and to sustainable capacity, in addition to measuring the quality of the capacity development process itself. It may also be useful to gear capacity development more towards nurturing long term, even unintended outcomes. The authors further draw a number of lessons linked to current evaluation dilemmas: evaluating the fit between capacity development efforts and ongoing development processes; taking into consideration that capacity development is not always a linear process; and understanding that the difficulty of attributing changes to specific capacity development efforts is an important clue as to how capacity development works.

Capacity-building approaches

Buldioski, G. 2012. 'Capacity building for think tanks'. *Goran's Musings* blogpost. 26th November 2012.
Access online

In this blogpost the author sets out the basis for a comprehensive capacity building initiative for think tanks. Starting with the approach's principles, it is argued that donors should only fund training to think tanks that demand it – anything else is 'futile'. Further, that mentoring, on-the-job training and learning, peer-to-peer and expert exchanges should take precedent ahead of one-off and short training activities, and that these need to be done with a mid-to-long-term horizon. Capacity building efforts also must enjoy wider organizational buy-in, even though the focus may only be on one person. The author also suggests that donors should encourage a healthy competition for training places. Capacity-building efforts can be directed at three tiers: basic (junior researchers); intermediate (researchers and senior researchers); and advanced. Lastly, capacity-building efforts can take a number of forms, including: core or project grants; mentoring, coaching, peer-to-peer exchanges, collective learning grants; and training events/activity series.

Marjanovic, S., Hanlin, R., Diepeveen, S., and Chataway, J. (2012) 'Research Capacity Building In Africa: Networks, Institutions And Local Ownership'. Innogen Working Paper No. 106. London/Cambridge: ESRC/RAND Europe.
Access online

This Working Paper has been produced as part of the Wellcome Trust's African Institutions Initiative, one aim of which is to strengthen health research capacity in Africa. The authors argue that Africa's key priorities in this field are supporting networked models to enhance the impact and efficiency of investments in health research capacity-building in Africa; the importance of ensuring stronger local ownership of initiatives; and the importance of building sustainable research institutions. However, despite the importance of research capacity-building for improving health outcomes, the evidence base on 'what works' and what does not in research capacity-building in African contexts remains fragmented. A key problem identified is that existing literature on research capacity-building tends to discuss policy-relevant issues at a relatively high-level with less insight into the nuances of implementing research capacity-building models and policy choices in every-day practice, or potential solutions to capacity-building challenges. In this paper the authors address this gap through an analysis of how multi-partner networks are built and how their success depends on building institutional level capacity strengthening within partner institutions with reference to the Initiative, which funds 7 interdisciplinary health research capacity-building consortia incorporating 51 institutions in 18 African countries, and 17 partners across Europe, the United States, Australia and Malaysia.

Jones, N., Bailey, M., and Lyytikainen, M. (2007) 'Research Capacity Strengthening in Africa: Trends, Gaps and Opportunities'. A scoping study commissioned by DFID on behalf of IFORD. London: Overseas Development Institute.
Access online

This report provides an overview of donor support for development capacity building in Africa to inform the Department for International Development (DFID)'s thinking about the role they can respectively play in the region, either as individual institutions or in partnership with other donors. The study consisted of a desktop/web review of grey and published literature, a systematic review of existing evaluation documents and key informant interviews with donors, intermediary organizations and a number of African institutions that receive support. By reviewing what is meant by capacity building in the area of research, and identifying a number of comparative entry points to assess how capacity is supported by donors the paper concludes that there are a number of positive impacts noted following capacity building support, including the creation of networks and partnerships, greater dissemination of research, increased enrolment in MA and PhD programmes, and improved research administration and research management capacities. However challenges include the limited demonstrable impact of research on policy, limited demand for research, a lack of quality assurance in research production, inadequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and limited inroads into institutional strengthening.

Kellerman, R., Klipstein-Grobusch, K., Weiner, R., Wayling, S., and Fonn, S. (2012) 'Investing in African research training institutions creates sustainable capacity for

Africa: the case of the University of the Witwatersrand School of Public Health masters programme in epidemiology and biostatistics'. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, Vol. 10, No. 11.

This article presents the findings of a review of a 3-year investment by the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) in research training at the School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. The review found that investing in African institutions to improve research training capacity resulted in the retention of graduates in Africa in research positions and thus greater research output. However, challenges remain if funding for students bursaries is not available.

British Academy & Association for Commonwealth Universities (2009) 'The Nairobi Report: Frameworks for Africa-UK Research Collaboration in the Social Sciences and Humanities'. London: British Academy & Association of Commonwealth Universities

This report is the culmination of a two-year process of reflection and discussion among African and UK scholars initiated by the British Academy and the Association of Commonwealth Universities, providing practical steps that need to be taken to strengthen humanities and social science research in Africa aimed at African universities and governments; national and international funders; and UK universities, the UK government and UK agencies involved in higher education and international collaboration. The report argues that it is evident that humanities and social sciences research is in urgent need of support across the continent, with universities and researchers facing many challenges as a result of declining funding despite a huge increase in enrolments. Infrastructure and facilities are insufficient and incomes have fallen, and many academics have been forced to sacrifice research in the face of impossible teaching and administrative commitments, and as they are compelled to find alternative sources of income. The report provides three central areas for intervention in higher education: Improving institutional foundations by focusing on structures, systems and governance; Strengthening cross collaboration with and within Africa through communities and networks; and investing in individual early-career researchers in the humanities and social sciences, including training in proposal writing and project management.

Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) (2010) 'The Proposed Research Programme and Collaborative Graduate Programme'. Consultation Paper. Nairobi: PASGR.

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) was initiated by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) to contribute to stronger evidence based political and social research and analysis in Africa. The initiative consists of a Research Programme and a Collaborative Graduate Programme. The Research Programme features four modalities: Policy Research Grants to finance multi-year, multi-faceted research by organizations; Partnership and Network Research Grants would involve PASGR working with other organizations on regional and international research initiatives; Commissioned Studies to allow PASGR to respond flexibly to subjects of special interest; and Special Research

Awards would accommodate unsolicited proposals, small grants for such purposes as doctoral thesis or post-doctoral research, preparation of case studies, and the application of skills obtained through a PASGR supported training activity. The CGP involves PASGR establishing formal partnerships with a number of universities. These partners would benefit from a professional development facility primarily for teaching staff from CGP universities; Masters level "building block" courses that will eventually form the core of a future collaborative master's programme that can also be used by CGP universities to strengthen existing disciplinary programs at the master's level; and, a collaborative doctoral level programming that would build on the master's programme. The PASGR programme is based on a survey of higher education in Africa, undertaken by the Association of Commonwealth Universities. The findings of the survey indicated that master's programs tend to have a weak focus on research methods in the social sciences, with graduates in 'traditional' social science disciplines in decline in favour of thematic subjects such as Conflict Studies. When research methods are taught, there is little opportunity to put this learning into practice. These limitations have important implications for graduates who go on to public sector jobs (especially involving policy development) who may not be equipped to understand research, to distinguish "good" research from "bad" or to appreciate the benefits or limitations of applying various research methods to different kinds of policy problems.

Newman, K., Fisher, C., and Shaxson, L. (2012) 'Stimulating demand for research evidence: what role for capacity-building?' *IDS Bulletin* Vol. 43, Issue 5.
Access online

The authors argue that while supporting evidence based policy by focussing on the supply-side of research (for instance, helping researchers communicate and package their findings) it is also just as important to focus upon the demand-side amongst users of research. Reframing the discussion in terms of 'evidence-informed policy' the authors describe it as policy that has considered a 'broad range' of research evidence, including citizen knowledge and the current realities of policy debates. Acknowledging that research-based evidence does not improve policy *per se*, it is argued that "where the will to develop policies which benefit society exists, better policies can be achieved when research is systematically considered as one factor in decision-making" (p. 18). Research demand encompasses both the *capacity* and *motivation* to demand research. A number of approaches to building capacity to demand research are identified: using diagnostic tools, for instance to assess 'Evidence Literacy'; training, though short-term fixes are not always sufficient; mentoring, for instance the UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) supports a mentoring scheme for parliamentary researchers in the Parliament of Uganda as part of their POST Africa programme; linking schemes; organizational policies; and societal interventions, such as the Development Policy Research Month (DPRM) in The Philippines which is designed to raise awareness. However, there is actually very little evidence on what type of intervention works best; therefore future capacity-building attempts need to be evaluated.

Mendizabal, E. (2013). 'An alternative to the supply, demand and intermediary model: competencies for all'. Onthinktanks blogpost. January 13th 2013.
Access online

In this blog article the author argues that the separation between those who supply research, those who demand it, and those who act as 'intermediaries' is artificial and a limiting factor in

the research-to-policy discussion. However, there is a creeping recognition (e.g. from AusAID) that these categories are infact porous. Referring back to his previous articulation of 'boundary workers' the author emphasises the need for organizations across the research and policy constellation to possess a set of basic competencies that ensure they are: a) active and respected members of the various communities that it seeks to bring together; and b) able to add value to that interaction by undertaking research, analysis, and/or reflection, and/or the application of ideas into practical actions. In practice, this for instance means that policymakers must have policy analysis skills in order to assess the credibility of evidence. It also means that organizations across the board need to be able to think critically, and evaluate and reflect upon their experience. The focus on the competencies of the 'suppliers' of research (policy research institutes, NGOs, think tanks) from programmes led by the ODI, DFID, and the Think Tank Initiative needs to be widened out across the 'sector.'

Lessons learned

Mendizabal, E., Datta, A., and Young, J. (2011). 'Developing capacities for better research uptake: the experience of ODI's Research and Policy in Development programme.' Background Paper. London: Overseas Development Institute.
Access online

The past decade has seen an increasing focus on the capacities of policymakers, researchers and donors to generate and use evidence. This paper provides an assessment of RAPID's experiences in this area. Tracing the programmes development and approach, the following themes are identified within their capacity building work: 1) Policy entrepreneurship; 2) Research communications; 3) Knowledge management and learning; 4) Outcome Mapping; 5) Monitoring and evaluation; 6) Network development and facilitation; 7) Organizational and project management. The lessons which emerge from RAPID's reflections include:

- Contrary to prior assumption, research capacity itself is very limited in some contexts, and especially capacity to research the interface between research and policy.
- There is less interest in studying the research-to-policy interface than assumed, with CSOs tending to work in specific policy areas.
- Capacity-building work was not always well-targeted, leading to RAPID working with organizations with very little research capacity due to ODI's consultancy-style funding model.
- Organizations operating in donor-rich contexts such as parts of sub-Saharan Africa (with little resulting competition over funds) have tended to find the competencies and skills offered by RAPID and ebpdn less appealing than those working in more competitive funding environments such as Latin America and Southeast Asia. Instead, demand for RAPID-type work in sub-Saharan Africa has tended to come from donors (like GDN or IDRC) or from NGOs wishing to develop their evidence-based advocacy capabilities.
- Longer-term capacity building activities, in which there is space to reflect on tools and sustainable communities of practice are built, are more beneficial than workshops.

Mizumoto, A. (2010). 'Evaluation of "Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia"(SIRCA) Programme'. Commissioned by the Singapore Internet Research Centre (SiRC) and International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

This report presents the findings from an evaluation of the "Strengthening ICTD Research Capacity in Asia" (SIRCA) Programme, which was established with the support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) under the "Developing Evaluation Capacity in ICTD" (DECI) project. DECI aims to build evaluation capacity in ICTD among its research partners in Asia by providing technical assistance to researchers to enhance evaluation knowledge and skills. An external consultant evaluated the period from the Programme's inception in March 2008 to July 2010. The SIRCA programme aimed to o the following: enhance research capacity in the region, demonstrated by the increased quality and reach of strong, methodologically rigorous, theoretically sound research findings; create space for discussions and knowledge sharing on ICTD social science research issues in Asia; create linkages among emerging ICTD researchers in Asia, and among established and emerging researchers through the mentorship program; and heighten awareness of ICTD research published by Asian-based researchers through dissemination of findings in international peer-reviewed publications and conferences. The evaluation found that the programme had led to a number of positive outcomes, including peer-reviewed publications and participation in international ICTD conferences. The report recommends that the programme takes advantage of opportunities to strengthen the programme by clarifying the programme's mission to fund emerging social scientists or to fund well-established ICTD researchers, and work towards refining and developing more monitoring indicators to chart progress.

Pound, B. and Adolph, B. (2005) 'Developing the Capacity of Research Systems in Developing Countries: Lessons Learnt and Guidelines for Future Initiatives'. Study commissioned by DFID Central Research Department. London: DFID.

According to this commissioned report, capacity is defined as: 'the ability of individuals, organizations and systems to perform and utilise research effectively, efficiently and sustainably in addressing local, national and regional priorities that will contribute to poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and to continuously learn and adapt to new challenges'. In the context of research for development, research capacity therefore involves: the systems, facilities and resources to work with relevant stakeholders to identify and define relevant researchable problem areas; develop and maintain research partnerships and networks; plan and implement research tasks; participate in and utilise international research; evaluate, select and adapt research findings; and publish, disseminate and apply research findings. The document offers a wider understanding of capacity development than traditional approaches, which focus on the enhancement of knowledge and skills of individuals, by looking at the total internal organizational environment (systems, structures, incentives, values, facilities, infrastructure and resources), the national innovation environment (policies, laws, economic trends, resource base, markets and international relations) and linkages with local, national and international stakeholders. Experiences from health research suggest a four-phased approach to capacity development: awareness creation; planning and implementation; expansion, and consolidation. In terms of assessing capacity development programmes, the paper offers generic monitoring indicators which fall under four capacity development "outputs": High research quality outputs relevant

to developmental needs; Effective and efficient organizational systems; Implementation of a multi-stakeholder research approach; Creative, dynamic and sustainable research organizations. At the centre of this approach, then, stands the development of organizational capacity in a locally-embedded system.

Research use amongst donors

Ravallion, M. (2011) 'Knowledgeable bankers? The demand for research in World Bank operations'. Background paper for 2011 Report on the World Bank Research Program. Washington D.C: World Bank.
Access online

This study evaluates demand for research within the World Bank, finding that while there is a stronger demand for research amongst staff working on poverty, human development and economic policy tend to value and use research more compared with staff in the traditional sectors of Bank lending—agriculture and rural development; the latter sectors account for 45 percent of lending but only 15 percent of staff highly familiar with Bank research. Building 'capacity' here entails creating stronger incentives for learning and more relevant and accessible research products, argues the author. However the study suggests, citing previous research, that the Bank's internal research capacity may lead to less 'demand' for new research, this stifling innovation. The study also indicates that there is lower familiarity with World Bank-generated research within Country Offices when compared to the Headquarters office, suggesting that investments in communications and technology (e.g. intranet) are not yet being realized at all levels.

Jones, H. and Mendizabal, E. (2010). 'Strengthening learning from research and evaluation: going with the grain: Final Report'. London: Overseas Development Institute.
Access online

How does DFID currently learn lessons from commissioned evaluations and research findings, and how can this be improved? Based on the findings of this study – which find that there is little use of intermediaries and more of a direct relationship between 'user' and 'producer' of knowledge – the authors offer a number of recommendations on how DFID could improve lesson learning capacity. These include: Establishing more formal and long term relationships with key UK-based think tanks and research centres and globally to provide high quality short and long term research and evaluation-based lessons to DFID and DFID staff; Strengthening the research and research uptake teams to act more as experts or matchmakers between researchers and policymakers rather than focus their attention on synthesis and dissemination and the support of intermediary portals and project; Better targeting of research funding, and provide clearer signals to researchers (outside DFID) about the specific current and future information needs of the organization at the global, regional and national levels; Focusing efforts and resources on improving the communication of research outputs and findings through mechanisms that promote and strengthen professional relationships between researchers and policymakers (e.g. regular seminars and events); and, continue to promote the use of funds available for quick policy research within policy teams. The paper

also emphasizes the need for DFID to review it human resourcing approaches, and attempt to 'raise the bar' in terms of the capacity of its advisors to understand and use evidence.

5.2 DEVELOPING POLICY INFLUENCE CAPACITY

As Section 2.3 demonstrates, policy influence has become an integral part of the research process. Yet even though the capacity to undertake, undertake and use research may exist, the translation and dissemination of this research requires a different set of skills. This is arguably why knowledge brokers and translators have found themselves at the forefront of research-to-policy discussions of late (see Section 3.1) and researchers encouraged to develop their communication as well as research skills. Following from Section 5.1 this section asks how the capacity of those wanting to influence policy can be built.

According to Court et al (2006), lack of capacity is the main reason why civil society organizations do not influence policy in the way they would like, a symptom of which is a lack of ownership over the development process (Keizjer et al, 2011). However this thinking suggests that influence is directly proportional to capacity. As Section 2.4 demonstrates, there are a number of other factors influencing the level of influence an organization has. While not sufficient, however, a degree of capacity is regarded as necessary to influence policy.

Policy influence is not an easily-defined outcome; and what 'policy influence' looks like will depend on an organization's strategy (see Section 2.4 on Policy Influence and Section 3 on Monitoring and Evaluation). Yet formulating the kinds of strategies needed to influence policy is a real challenge for many organizations, with many lacking the capacity to undertake an appropriate analysis of their influencing context (Simpson et al, 2006). Further difficulties relating to a lack of awareness of the policy process, ability to use evidence, and networking challenges are also identified in the literature. To address this, an ODI paper by Start & Hovland (2004) presents a number of tools to help organizations assess context, as well as plan how they should best approach policy influence in accordance with their position and resources; while Jones & Hearn (2009) discuss Outcome Mapping as a 'realistic alternative' for influencing strategies, and Weyrauch a& Echt (2012) offer guidance on how to develop a policy influence plan.

In terms of guidance, the literature is in agreement that there is no blueprint or 'one size fits all' (Simpson et al 2006) approach to building capacity for influence; however there is a trend towards moving away from an individual-based approach focused on leadership, management, and operation towards a 'systems' perspective which involves a more holistic view. In a review of capacity building best practices Court et al (2006) argue that capacity building initiatives work best when there is broad-based participation and a locally-driven agenda; it builds on local capacities; takes a long-term approach with continuous learning and adaptation; and integrates activities at different levels to address often complex problems. Mendizabal and Zeuthen (2012) emphasise the need to target capacity-building activities at the right people and organizations, as well as to recognise the limitations of web-based - as opposed to face-to-face – approaches.

Interestingly, the literature on capacity for policy influence tends to assume that the use of evidence is an integral part of any capacity-building initiative and policy influence strategy. As

discussed in Section 2.1, 2.2, and 2.4, this is not the case *per se* – successful policy influence does not always involve the use of evidence ([Chowdhury et al, 2006](#)). As [Young & Mendizabal (2009)](#) argue, facts are not always "enough", so policy arguments need to be presented in a way that cohere with existing ideas, beliefs, and values. Other approaches identified include networking with other organizations ([Court et al, 2006](#)).

However, policy networks are also viewed as an effective way of both influencing policy and promoting the sharing of research ([Selvood & Weyrauch, 2007](#)); and as the discussion in Section 2.4 and 2.2 demonstrated, while using 'stories' to present research findings has caused some concern regarding the simplification of complex research findings, Weiss' 'Enlightenment' model of research utilization suggests that this is not entirely at odds with evidence-based policy decisions. The literature also includes guidance on how to engage in research-based policy advocacy ([Blagescu & Young, 2006](#)), with other important insights coming from the more general literature on successful advocacy campaigns ([Stalker & Sandberg, 2011](#)) ([Save the Children, 2007),](#) including the need to learn across advocacy coalitions and foster good relationships with other advocates .

Importantly, there is also an increasing awareness of the need for donors to improve their own influencing capacity while engaging in national policy processes in recipient countries ([Jones, 2011](#); [Maetz & Balié, 2008](#)). These discussions emphasise the need to use contextual knowledge and engage in policy discussions with policymakers in developing countries while using evidence.

RESOURCES

How to influence

Start, D. and Hovland, I. (2004) 'Tools for Policy Impact: A Handbook for Researchers'. London: ODI.
[Access online](#)

How can researcher ensure that their findings have an impact upon policy? As civil society organizations are increasingly recognising the need to influence policy and decision making processes more effectively, the importance of basing policies on sound research and evidence is clear. This paper offers guidance to 'evidence-based civil society organizations' (or 'think tanks') which might include organizations more used to interest-group campaigning and advocacy who have a rich source of knowledge on an issue. The group also includes research institutes and universities. The authors present and discuss a number of tools for civil society organizations to influence policy, including: The Four Types of Policy Entrepreneurship; Boston Box; Networking; Policy papers; A lobbyist's hierarchy of needs; Getting to Yes; 4 Ps of being influential; Engaging public participation; and campaigning alliances.

Court, J., Mendizabal, E., Osborne, D, and Young, J. (2006) 'Policy Engagement: How Civil Society can be More Effective'. London: Overseas Development Institute
[Access online](#)

In order to influence policy in a way that benefits the poor, CSOs in developing countries need to engage in government policy processes more effectively. This paper argues that increased democratisation and enhanced communication technology there is huge potential for partnerships between civil society organizations and policymakers, yet civil society organizations are not making the best use of their resources. They are often marginalised, their legitimacy questioned, and their evidence base challenged by researchers. The authors assert that civil society organizations must make better use of evidence and subsequently better engage in the policy process at various stages. Currently, lack of capacity is the main reason why civil society organizations fail to influence policy in the way they want. Largely, this lack of capacity concerns contextual analysis, awareness of the policy process, ability to use evidence, and networking challenges. It is argued that capacity building approaches need to adopt a systems perspective rather than focussing on improving the leadership, management, and operation of an organization. The authors argue that capacity building initiatives work best when there is broad-based participation and a locally-driven agenda; it builds on local capacities; takes a long-term approach with continuous learning and adaptation; and integrates activities at different levels to address often complex problems.

Young, J., and Mendizabal, E. (2009) 'Helping Researchers become Policy Entrepreneurs'. ODI Briefing paper 53. London: Overseas Development Institute.
Access online

In this influential briefing paper Young and Mendizabal suggest that 'facts alone – no matter how authoritative – may not be enough' when attempting to influence policy. Based on the Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) group's work over the last ten years the authors describe policy processes as complex and rarely logical, with policy being only weakly informed by evidence due to the power of personal ideas, values, and beliefs. It is recommended that 'policy entrepreneurs' who wish to influence policy using evidence need to possess an in-depth understanding of the context in which they operate, by understanding political dynamics and key players. They also need to be good storytellers able to synthesise simple compelling stories from the results of the research; good networkers to work effectively with all the other stakeholders; and good engineers, building a programme that pulls all of this together. However turning a researcher into a policy entrepreneur involves a number of sometimes difficult steps: a fundamental re-orientation towards policy engagement rather than academic achievement; greater engagement with the policy community; developing a research agenda focusing on policy issues rather than academic interests; acquiring new skills or building multidisciplinary teams; establishing new internal systems and incentives; spending much more on communications; producing a different range of outputs; working more in partnerships and networks; and potentially working with a different funding model.

Jones, H., and Hearn, S. (2009) 'Outcome Mapping: a realistic alternative for planning, monitoring and evaluation'. ODI Background Note. London: Overseas Development Institute.
Access online

Outcome Mapping (OM) is a planning, monitoring and evaluation tool which enables reseachers and practitioners to measure influence in terms of changes in behaviour, actions, and relationships of individuals. Actor-centric, OM is an ideal tool for projects in which

capacity building is an objective. However OM also builds the capacity of those who use the tool, by allowing adequate space for political analysis and actor mapping. Yet employing OM also requires a degree of capacity, and can be especially challenging when staff are familiar with other tools such as the Logical Framework Approach. It is therefore recommended that the tool is led by an experienced practitioner. OM is also particularly helpful when tackling complex problems where a number of inter-connected issues are involved and 'progress' relies on the interactions of many different actors and plans may require revision in accordance with real-time changes.

Save the Children (2007) 'Advocacy Matters: Helping children change their world. An International Save the Children Alliance guide to advocacy'. London: Save the Children
Access online

This guide is for practitioners who are involved in advocacy. It can be uses to help people running an advocacy workshop, or as a general advocacy resource. The training material consists of a mixture of practical exercises and theory so that participants learn about advocacy in a way that is relevant to their specific needs and context, and they will come out of the workshop with a draft of an advocacy strategy. Through the pages, participants will: gain a deeper understanding, and develop a working definition, of experience and evidence-based advocacy as it applies to children's needs and rights; understand the basic elements of advocacy, its role in Save the Children, and how it is integrated into programme work to achieve real and lasting results for children; learn a set of steps to plan for strategic advocacy and begin to develop an advocacy plan related to your work; strengthen personal relationships with fellow advocates, learning from each other's experience, and working towards building a community of advocacy practitioners; and develop a plan to share this workshop's learning with colleagues, allies and constituents.

**Simpson, A., Cass, S., and Tomlinson, B. (2006) Chapter 6: "Building Knowledge and Capacity for Policy Influence", in _Building Skills and Capacity for Policy Influence_.
Ottawa: Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC).**
Access online

In terms of capacity building, this chapter argues that no 'one size fits all' for policy organizations looking to build their capacity for policy influence, and therefore the focus must be upon assessing context. However, reflecting on their experience in the Building Knowledge and Capacity project, they advise that organizations may also need to re-evaluate the importance placed on field experience when recruiting and hiring staff due to the competencies and mindsets required for good programming work "on the ground" often being the antitheses of those required for good policy work. Thus, in order to build policy capacity, it is critical to hire individuals who have good policy skills and understand how policy is developed in government circles, and balance these qualifications with those required to meet the organization's program in the field. It is further recommended that organizations make a clear commitment of a percentage of their revenue to staffing for policy work. However capacity for policy work is often built most effectively by learning by doing as part of a larger community of practice.

Weyrauch, V., and Echt, L. (2012) 'How to design a policy influence plan?' Buenos Aires: CIPPEC.

The policy making process exists within a [changing and highly volatile context](#). It is complex, and different players intervene, each with their own interests and motivations. Considering this complexity and the reigning chaos in the public policies area (product, among other things, of the numerous players seeking to influence it, the political environment itself, and unexpected events). The ten guides of the series "How to design a policy influence plan?" address the various components of a [public policy influence plan](#), which consists on the definition of a series of components which contribute to specify and define [opportunities for the organization](#), [objectives](#), [actors and alliances](#), [a concrete proposal](#), [strategies](#), [messages and channels for communication](#), [necessary resources](#) and a [system to M&E policy influence](#). Readers can also find the [Spanish version](#).

LSE Public Policy Group (2011) 'Maximizing the impacts of your research: a handbook for social scientists'. London: London School of Economics.
[Access online](#)

This handbook seeks to open the door to researchers achieving a more professional and focused approach to their research from the outset. It provides a large menu of sound and evidence-based advice and guidance on how to ensure that their work achieves its maximum visibility and influence with both academic and external audiences. It provides information on what constitutes good practice in expanding the impact of social science research, and also surveys a wide range of new developments, new tools and new techniques that can help make sense of a rapidly changing field.

Mendizabal, E. and Zeuthen, M. (2012). 'Developing research communications capacity: Lessons from recent experience.' London: Mendizabal Limited/Integrity Research.
[Access online](#)

In 2011, both the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) designed and delivered a capacity development project to improve the research communications capacity of several African research grantees of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). In this paper the initiatives are reviewed and key lessons identified. The authors present the following key messages to take away from the review:

- **Limits of planning:** In both cases, as well as in other cases consulted, the interventions did not go as planned. There is little that ODI or INASP, as the service providers, could control and several grantees faced conflicting demands, lost interest, or were simply not capable of taking advantage of the services offered by the either ODI or INASP.
- **Lack of interest from grantees:** Despite expressing interest in being involved in projects, several grantees did not engage in the learning aspect of the project and did not change their research communications strategy. In short, their participation was driven more by an interest in being part of such initiative to satisfy donor demands rather than in the initiative itself,

- **Researchers have other interests and pressures besides communications:** most researchers are not only often more interested in researching than communicating but the business models of their organizations often demand that they spend a significant amount of time seeking and delivering new projects. As a consequence, any activities that are not seen to directly support their core business are unlikely to be given the priority they demand to be effective.
- **Face-to-face is better than virtual, but the web is a good alternative:** ODI's original proposal had been to host the grantees for a few weeks to give them a chance to meet the team in charge of research communications and even participate in some activities. The idea was rejected and webinars were introduced as an alternative. Though they worked well INASP's event worked more effectively, ensuring attendance and discouraging other distractions.
- **If it is not done at the beginning, then it is probably too late:** In all cases the researchers had finished or were about to finish their research. The project was therefore final activity for the grantees, an 'add on' to the project with only months to go. Furthermore, while the support provided was intended to lead to a communications strategy, there were no additional funds to implement such a strategy and there was little incentive to invest time in research communications work.
- **The right people matter**: Both ODI and INASP intended to develop the capacity of the networks or organizations involved and not just that of the individuals who participated in the capacity development projects. The ambition was for the people receiving the support to then go on and train or mentor other members of their networks or organizations. However, the participants were not always the 'right' people for this objective. While senior researchers, network coordinators, and even communicators may be excellent candidates to make use of any skills learned during the webinars or workshops, this does not necessarily make them the most appropriate 'trainers of trainers'.
- **Local or regional facilitators and mentors:** INASP's approach involved using regionally -based facilitators and mentors and this had a positive effect on the project. Conversely, ODI was able to connect with the grantees it was supporting only after visiting their offices, and concerns about the consultants' lack of familiarity with their context were raised.
- **No one is starting from scratch**: It is important to remember that all the grantees, to different degrees, have some sort of research communications capacity; and in some cases, their personal and professional networks ensure greater levels of impact than any formal research communication strategy could ever promise. Furthermore, many communication tactics and channels that are common for developed countries or the United Kingdom, and that ODI and INASP are more familiar with, may not be appropriate for the grantees' contexts.

Influence and donor relations

Jones, H. (2011) 'Donor Engagement in Policy Dialogue: Navigating the Interface between Knowledge and Power'. Thinkpiece for AusAID. London: ODI.
Access online

This thinkpiece, produced for AusAID, is designed to guide donor organizations who are increasingly engaging in 'policy dialogue' in the countries they work. The author presents an

attempt to support donors influence successfully for maximum development success. Recent evidence from DFID suggests that for relatively low costs large changes can be made when donor representatives engage directly with policymakers in developing countries, particularly when 'sector specific' advisors were deployed. Thinking about how to approach policy dialogue for policy influence is therefore an important way of ensuring that aid funds are used effectively, as well as working towards greater donor harmonisation. However, Jones is careful to point out that engaging in policy dialogue in this way confronts real issues of power, and donors must be aware that engaging in the policy process is rarely neutral. A thorough contextual understanding of the policy environment is therefore required from donor representatives.

Maetz, M., and Balié, J. (2008) 'Influencing policy processes: Lessons from experience'. Rome: FAO
Access online

This paper identifies lessons on the basis of the FAO's experience of trying to affect policy change in developing countries. A key finding of this study is that influencing the policy process requires a focus not only on technical skills (e.g. economics, agriculture, forestry, trade, rural development, etc.), but also on "soft" skills such as sociology, political science, negotiation, facilitation, consensus-building and conflict resolution. Facilitation requires neutrality in cases where the conditions are favourable to change, and in less favourable conditions, advocacy and alliance-building may be needed. The lessons identified by the authors indicate that when donors try to influence national policy processes, stakeholders with the power to block progress must be identified and brought on board.

Keijzer, N., Spierings, E., and Heirman, J. (2011) 'Research for development? The role of Southern research organizations in promoting democratic ownership: A Literature review'. Maastricht: ECPDM.
Access online

Research organizations can promote ownership of the development process, argues this paper. The paper – drafted to support the OECD DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness – explores how researchers in the global south can be supported to build their capacity to influence the development agenda from a locally-owned perspective. Citing the importance of political economy analysis to understand the context in which they are working, it is recommended that in turn more effort is made by donors to understand the ways in which information is understood and used in developing countries. The paper also highlights the need for capacity strengthening of southern research organizations, and the need for donors to prioritise investments in this area.

How important is evidence?

Pollard, A., and Court, J. (2005) 'How civil society uses evidence to influence policy – A literature review'. ODI Working Paper 249. London: ODI.
Access online

This Working Paper is predicated upon the belief that the use of evidence is central to both influencing policy and ensuring policy is effective. Internally, the authors argue that the use of

research helps civil society actors become 'better organizations'. However, civil society organizations – which are 'reservoirs of research' – do not always make the best use of the evidence they possess. The paper is therefore oriented towards helping civil society organizations to better understand how evidence can be used to influence the policy process at different stages: agenda-setting; formulation; implementation; and monitoring and evaluation. The authors argue that evidence is influential because it enhances the legitimacy of a civil society organization in technical, legal, and moral terms; it enhances the effectiveness of projects and allows for the gathering of lessons learned which can be shared with others; it aids integration between practical reality (for instance, in delivering services) with the rest of the policy process; it translates communal knowledge into legitimate evidence, thus ensuring that the policy process is participatory; it allows for greater access to policymakers and inclusion in policy debates; and it helps facilitate ongoing and interactive discussion between civil society and policymakers. On this basis, the paper emphasizes the need to support civil society organizations to better use evidence for influencing purposes.

Kornsweig, J., Osborne, D., Hovland, I., and Julius Court (2006) 'CSOs, Policy Influence, and Evidence Use: A Short Survey'. London: Overseas Development Institute
Access online

What support do CSOs in the developing world need to influence policy? This paper presents the findings of a survey of staff members from 130 civil society organizations across 33 countries. The research demonstrated that policy influencing was a high priority for all types of civil society organization, with Governance/Accountability and Rural Livelihoods/Agriculture being the most frequently-cited area of focus. However, the authors highlight that policy influencing concerns were usually directed at cross-sectorial issues. The majority of respondents reported that their principal way of influencing policy was to network with other organizations, while three of the four lowest responses – 'work on projects commissioned by policymakers', 'newsletter to policymakers', and 'insider lobbying' – were all activities most directly related to working with policymakers. Importantly, respondents favored activities that are indirect. In terms of evidence, respondents preferred case studies as a means of influence, though nearly a third said that academic papers were considered to be highly effective. The ways in which civil society organizations could be supported to improve their policy impact included: More financial support; Creation of space for civic engagement in policy discussions/public dialogue/dissemination bodies; Cooperation of legislative bodies; Monitoring and evaluation of policies and policymakers; Build capacities/train professions with regards to research and policy development, including lobbying and influencing skills, and the creation of a research unit within civil society organizations.

Matondi, P.B., and Rukuni, M. (2010) 'Rebuilding Capacity For Policy Analysis And 'Pro-poor' Policy Making In Africa'. Harare: Rusivo Trust.
Access online

This paper deals with Africa-wide capacity for policy engagement on land issues and agricultural investment in the context of Africa's infamous 'land grabs'. The authors argue that African institutions are weak in speaking out on the issue due to under-funding and a lack of research base with which to work. The paper suggests that more 'action research' is required

in order to generate relevant and timely information while also implementing initiatives to practically improve the lives of poor people. The Rusivo Trust endeavours to do the following in this area: trends analysis of existing practices; examining implications for governance; impact and outcome assessments; and an analysis of agrarian change and structural reform. African research networks are encouraged as a means of sharing knowledge and building a critical mass of evidence for policy influence.

Chowdhury, N., Finlay-Notman, C., and Hovland, I. (2006) 'CSO Capacity for Policy Engagement: Lessons Learned from the CSPP Consultations in Africa, Asia and Latin America'. Working Paper 272. London: Overseas Development Institute.
Access online

The findings from ODI's consultations with partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America proceeded upon the belief that there is a low interest in research amongst policymakers , and while in almost every country there are research institutions that are either wholly funded by government (e.g. the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies) or partially funded by government (e.g. the Centre for Social and Economic Studies in Indonesia), in reality both seem to have only limited impact on advancing policymakers' interest in research. In the African consultations, the problem of the 'Politics of Participation' was a key discussion point. Here it seemed that capacity was not the biggest problem: CSOs may be invited to join the agenda-setting 'debate', but *after* the government has made a decision, meaning that civil society is sought for legitimation rather than informing purposes. Moreover, policies are often short term and formed as a reaction to a crisis, such the Malawian food crisis which heralded new discussion on food policy. There is therefore little time or appetite for sustained research, and even where research may already have been conducted, policy is again formed irrespective of this. The implication here is that reform of the entire political system is necessary – in other words, changing the process, not just the policy. The 'capacity' question thus appears less relevant. However, in terms of actionable steps civil society organizations can take to maximise their (evidence-based) influence in policy is to: establish credibility with policymakers, for instance in some contexts by not appearing too aligned with donors; have (and use) access to solid, appropriate research that produces accurate, usable evidence, as much to affirm their credibility to policymakers, and help form good relationships, as to actually use in the policymaking process itself; and document evidence taken from the grassroots. Yet the African consultations threw up the issue of the importance of oral communication, implying that technical reports (and building the capacity of civil society organizations to produce them) might not be the most effective way of influencing policy.

Policy advocacy

Blagescu, M., and Young, J. (2006) 'Capacity Development for Policy Advocacy: Current thinking and approaches among agencies supporting Civil Society Organizations'. ODI Working Paper 260. London: Overseas Development Institute.
Access online

This Working Paper is part of the ODI's Civil Society Partnerships Programme (CSPP) designed to help civil society organizations in developing countries to engage in development policy using evidence, and presents a summary of current thinking of issues on capacity

building for Northern and Southern organizations involved in using research-based evidence in policy processes. However there has to date been a lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of capacity building initiatives, meaning that approaches lack coherence. Based on ODI's own experiences of capacity building initiatives this review draws out two lessons: (i) that a broader range of approaches is necessary to respond to the complexities of the current context; and (ii) no approach can be imposed on sceptical individuals, organizations or communities. The paper subsequently examines the approaches taken by eleven different organizations, including the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the INTRAC Praxis Programme.

Stalker, C., with Sandberg, D. (2011) 'Capacity building for advocacy'. Praxis Paper 25. Oxford: INTRAC.
Access online

This guidance note suggests that before an intervention takes place it is important to identify the 'under-capacity' problems and best solutions to address them. However, assessing advocacy capacity building interventions is a complex business and dimensions of success and change are not always clear. According to the authors, these complexities again highlight the importance of a sound diagnosis and setting clear, plausible objectives against which to measure change. This paper shows that for a capacity building intervention to be effective, civil society organizations must be aware of the complex nature of advocacy and follow a strategic, diagnostic approach.

Networks

Selvood, I., and Weyrauch, V. (2007) 'Weaving global networks. Handbook for policy influence'. Buenos Aires: Fundación CIPPEC.
Access online

Concluding that global networks involving the use of research to influence policy, CIPPEC have presented four case studies on global or regional networks that concretely illustrate their diverse challenges and how these networks have been able or not to face them. The selected case studies are: GCAP (Global Call Against Poverty); IFRTD (International Forum for Rural Transport and Development); TILAC and the CICC (Inter American Convention Against Corruption); TKN (Trade Knowledge Network). It is suggested that networks function to support capacity across network members to share lessons and increase their impact upon the policy process. Networks offer civil society organizations a number of benefits, including shared mechanisms to facilitate the transfer of knowledge between members and to policymakers; they draw attention to new issues in the global agenda; they offer a new mechanism to bridge diverging problem assessments and political constellations and thus promote a unified stance on a policy issue; and they highlight issues of accountability within the policy process.

Case studies

Macedo de Jesus, A. (2010) 'Policymaking and Interest Groups: How do Local Government Associations Influence Policy Outcome in Brazil and the Netherlands?' *Brazilian Political Science Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 69-101.
Access online

This study considers policy influence at local level in both Brazil and The Netherlands in order to identify what factors make policy influence more likely. The author concludes that groups who represent ideas and messages supported by the rest of the populace are more successful than ones that do not; that financial resources are essential for a group to possess the necessary capacity to influence at local level. It is also important for a group wishing to influence policy at local level to be aware of formal and informal relationships between local government and the Executive and Parliament at national level, indicating the centrality of adequate mapping and analysis prior to influencing activities.

Kibua, T.N., and Oyugi, L.N. (2006) 'Chapter Twelve: Influencing development policies through research: the Kenyan experience'. In Elias T. Ayuk and Mohamed Ali Marouani (eds). *The Policy Paradox in Africa - Strengthening Links between Economic Research and Policymaking.* **Ottawa: IDRC.**
Access online

This chapter examines the policy-making process in Kenya and examines the divergence between theory and practice in policy-making by offering a case study of how the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) has influenced policy. In order to influence policy the authors highlights the importance of recruiting highly qualified and credible researchers, possessing adequate financial means, and strong networks and relationships with stakeholders which do not compromise independence. Indeed, IPAR's success in influencing policy hinges on the perception of stakeholders about its credibility. While there is no single index for measuring capacity for policy influence, it is possible to identify successful examples of policy influence. The authors offer two examples from IPAR: a paper produced by one of its research associates on privatization of security in Kenya; and a series of studies produced on the public transport sector following demands from the government.

6. USEFUL WEBSITES AND ORGANIZATIONS

On think tanks
www.onthinktanks.org

Research to action
http://www.researchtoaction.org/

The Evaluation Exchange (Harvard Family Research Project)
http://www.hfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange

My M&E
http://www.mymande.org/

Impact of Social Sciences. Maximizing the impact of academic research (London School of Economics)
http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/

Theory of change Community
http://www.theoryofchange.org/

Center for Evaluation Innovation
www.evaluationinnovation.org

The chronicles of philanthropy

http://philanthropy.com/section/Home/172

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
http://www.gatesfoundation.org/Pages/home.aspx

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
http://www.hewlett.org/

The Think Tank Fund Program (Open Society Foundations)
http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/about/programs/think-tank-fund

Policy Impact Toolkit template:
http://policyimpacttoolkit.squarespace.com/pip/

ResearchGate
 www.researchgate.net

Graduate Junction
www.graduatejunction.net

MethodSpace
www.methodspace.com

Nature Network
http://network.nature.com

Knowledge Sharing Tools and Methods Toolkit
http://www.kstoolkit.org/Toolkit+Journal

ICT – KM Program
http://ictkm.cgiar.org

United Nations University K* Initiative
http://www.inweh.unu.edu/River/KnowledgeManagement/KStar.htm

Relay Reporting Research
http://panosrelay.org.uk

Research Reporting Guidelines and Initiatives: Organization of the US National Institute of Health
http://www.nlm.nih.gov/services/research_report_guide.html

A Journalist's Guide to Reporting Research Findings
http://panos.org.uk/wp-content/files/2011/06/A-journalists-guide-to-reporting-research-findings.pdf

Research Journalism
http://researchjournalism.wordpress.com/about/

Journalists' Resource
http://journalistsresource.org/

Vinculando la investigación y las políticas públicas en América Latina
www.vippal.cippec.org

Knowledge Mobilisation Institute
http://www.knowledgemobilization.net/

Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR)
http://www.pasgr.org/

Development Research Uptake in Sub-Saharan Africa (DRUSSA)
http://www.drussa.net/

International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP)
http://www.inasp.info/

EBPDN
http://www.ebpdn.org/

Research for Development (DFID)
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/r4d/

Research and Policy in Development (RAPID)
http://www.odi.org.uk/programmes/rapid

Mobilising Knowledge for Development (MK4D)
http://www.ids.ac.uk/knowledge-services

Association for Progressive Communications
http://www.apc.org/