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# Policy Forum 2016

## Conclusions and recommendations

### Policy forum

#### **From policy engagement to research uptake: Lessons for and from developing country researchers**

**Moderated by John Young, ODI**

Better utilization of evidence in policy and practice can help save lives, reduce poverty and improve development performance. While all countries face the challenge of promoting greater use of scientific evidence, the obstacles are significantly greater in developing countries - where social and political environments are more difficult, capacity is limited and resources are scarcer. This challenge inspired the theme of the international Policy Forum held during the [2016 PEP Annual Conference](#) in Manila, Philippines on June 8, 2016.

The discussion portion of the Policy Forum began with an expert-panel discussion involving seven researchers, policymakers and advisors from Asia, Africa and Latin America, who were invited to share their personal views and experiences of the research-policy nexus, providing examples of successful collaborations:

- Damilola Olajide, Nigeria  
*Senior Research Fellow at the Initiative for Public Policy Analysis*
- Ponciano Intal Jr, Indonesia  
*Senior Researcher at the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia*
- Ana Lucia Kassouf, Brazil  
*Professor at the Department of Economics, University of Sao Paulo*
- Sudarno Sumarto, Indonesia  
*Senior Research Fellow at the SMERU Research Institute*
- Oluwole Lateef Akanle, Nigeria  
*Manager at the Amoye Microfinance Bank Ltd.*
- Cielo Krisel Lagman-Luistro, Philippines  
*City Mayor of Tabaco*
- Nikica Mojsoska-Blazevski, Macedonia  
*Dean and Professor at the University American College Skopje*



**IDRC | CRDI**

International Development Research Centre  
Centre de recherches pour le développement international

**Canada**



**Economic Research Institute  
for ASEAN and East Asia**



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This discussion was moderated by [John Young](#), Head of the Research and Policy in Development Programme at the Overseas Development Institute ([ODI](#)), whose work focuses on the research-policy interface, including the development of world-leading programs to help maximize the impact of research on policy and practice.

Following the panel discussion, Mr. Young invited the room to gather in small (table) focus groups, to debate and agree upon an answer for each of a series of questions, and then share their answers with the audience.

Below are summarized the key lessons and conclusions drawn from these discussions.

### What can researchers do to maximize the use of research?

- Communicate better
  - Invest more time and resources in dissemination
  - Explain your findings in a way that policy makers will understand
    - Provide clear descriptions of your findings and what they mean
  - Learn to make use of a range of available tools, channels and experts, including the media
  - Educate local communities and encourage grassroots pressure on policymakers
- Create stronger ties with policymakers
  - Ties should last beyond a particular study or project
  - Work with government administrators who have links with both the community and policymakers
  - Ensure policymakers have easy access to reliable information
- Ensure that your “product” is relevant and high quality
  - Work with multidisciplinary teams to address different elements of the policymaking process
  - Make sure there is a real demand for evidence on the chosen topic
  - Produce reliable results answering policy-relevant questions and filling knowledge gaps



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### What can research funders, like PEP, do to maximize the research uptake?

- Help bring together researchers and decision makers
  - Through collaboration and communication (networking)
- Provide support and expertise for research communication activities
  - Training, funding, advisory, etc.
- Help each side (research and policy) appreciate the other's work
  - Researchers need a better understanding of policy processes
  - Research should be both accessible and understandable to policy actors

[Arjan de Haan](#), Program Leader of Employment and Growth at the International Development Research Centre ([IDRC](#)), explained the donor organization point of view:

- Researchers need to take the lead in
  - Convincing donors and practitioners that the proposed research is useful and worthwhile.
  - Creating links and dialogues with policy actors.
  - Presenting evidence of impact.

Bringing together the conclusions from both Policy Forum sessions, John Young said:

*"The take away from today is that **we need to tell a compelling story**. It has to be clear that **research can have tangible benefits on people's lives as well as on policies**. We need to **generate compelling evidence of the value of investing in knowledge activities**. And we must continue to change attitudes to how research is assessed – scientific quality is not enough, we also need **to look at its (policy) impact**."*