

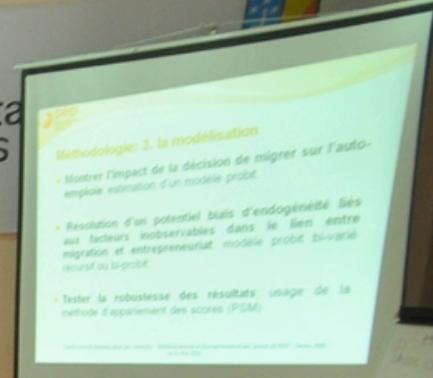


pep
partnership for
economic
policy



Conférence de dissémination des résultats
sur la mobilité interne et l'entrepreneuriat des

Lieu: Rusina hôtel
Heure: 10h⁰⁰



Evidence-informed policy briefing

Communicating research VS

Communication evidence-informed policy advice

Manuel Paradis, Marjorie Alain

2020 PEP General Meeting

September 22, 2020

Communication

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

George Bernard Shaw

“Communications are adequate if they reach people with the information that they need in a form that they can use.”

Baruch Fischhoff



Workshop: 3 core lessons

- 1 - Research evidence is only “one piece of the (policy) puzzle”
- 2 - The key is to understand what your audience needs and wants
- 3 - All is played in the first few lines (or 30 seconds)



Effective policy communication

What the literature says:

Cairney et al., 2016-2019

“It’s very context-dependent”

Brick et al., 2018

“No science/answers about “what works”

What decision-makers need:

- A clear summary of potential outcomes of their decisions*
- Describing the potential harms and benefits of different options”*



Evidence-Based
policymaking

VS

Evidence-Informed
policymaking



Evidence-BASED policymaking

EBPM:

- Policy decisions (recommendations) must be BASED on facts and available evidence
- **Evidence** is generated **from science/research**

Sutcliffe, S. (2005). Evidence-Based Policymaking: What is it? How does it work? What relevance for developing countries?

Jensen, E. A., & Gerber, A. (2020). Evidence-based science communication. Frontiers in Communication



Evidence-BASED policymaking

EBPM is criticized:

- Oversimplifies the policy process.
- Misconstrues the way that policy decisions are usually made
- Key issues :
 - What evidence is used ?
 - How is evidence used ?
 - Is evidence the only factor in decision ?



Evidence-INFORMED policymaking

EIPM:

- Policy should be informed, **IN PART**, by research/scientific evidence
 - Evidence **is ONE of many inputs** into the policy process
 - Evidence refers to “best knowledge available” in a given context
 - When considering scientific evidence, must take account of:
 - Quality, credibility,
 - Relevance (contextual),
 - Timeliness and constraints,
 - Cost of the policy



Evidence-INFORMED policymaking

EIPM:

- Acknowledge the complexity of the process – which requires
 - **Understanding:**
 - the political & legal contexts, the actors involved...
 - Policymaking is a **multi-level process**:
 - communication and outreach not only with top-level actors



Evidence-INFORMED policymaking

EIPM:

- Acknowledge the complexity of the process – which requires
 - **Mobilizing a variety of knowledge**
 - Evidence can come from a variety of sources and fields and is needed/used at different points of the policy cycle
 - Evidence must **not necessarily derive from experimental methods** to be considered a valid input for policymaking
- Also recognizes:
 - There is **always ambiguity and uncertainty** on expected impacts and the mechanism by which the intervention delivers its effects



Evidence-INFORMED policymaking

“Evidence for policy making is any information that helps policymakers make decisions and get results that are concrete, manageable and achievable.”

(Shaxson, 2005)

*“We do not see (evidence-informed policy) as a policy that is exclusively based on research, or on one set of findings. **We accept that in some cases, research evidence may be considered and rejected;** if rejection was based on understanding of the insights that the research offered then we would still consider any resulting policy to be evidence-informed”*

(Newman, Fisher and Shaxson, 2012)



Communicating
research results

Vs

Communicating
evidence-informed policy advice



Why this workshop?

- The **ultimate objective of PEP** research is to inform policy
 - Training & mentoring / Policy paper / Outreach strategy / Consultations / Dissemination..
- **Effective communication is essential** for evidence to reach/influence policy



Communicating Research Results

Objective is to communicate:

- Research results
- Policy recommendations derived from these results

Process is by

- Publishing:
 - Research paper/scientific article
 - Policy brief
- Disseminating
 - Through conferences, research centers, network..



Communicating Evidence-Informed Policy Advice

Objective is to integrate research evidence into the policymaking process:

- Requires understanding 1) the process, and 2) how evidence relates to broader policy considerations

Process is by

- Consulting and engaging with relevant parties involved (multi-level/sector)
- Analyzing the broader policy context and strategies
- Positioning the evidence into the policy decision framework



Communicating Evidence-Informed Policy Advice

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POLICY PAPER



Communicating Evidence-Informed Policy Advice

Science and politics

- Bargaining is an ongoing feature of a democratic political system:
 - Policymaking is shaped by **values, ideologies,** and (economic) **interests**
 - Policymakers always have “**options**” to choose from – need to compare
- Collaboration is needed with various actors (with different “topic literacy”)
 - Requires different messaging, of varying complexities (based on relative literacy and specific interests/needs)

Partisans are likely to “cherry-pick” evidence that supports their existing positions

Head, B. W. (2016). Toward more “evidence-informed” policy making Public Administration Review, 76(3), 472-484

Brick, C et al. (2018).” Winners and losers: communicating the potential impacts of policies”, in Palgrave Communication, 4:69

Young, E. & Quinn, L. (2002). Writing an effective policy paper”, Open Society Institute, Budapest



Communicating Evidence-Informed Policy Advice

Science and politics

- **Consider the “policy area/context”:**
 - State of the policy area/decision context?
 - “Settled” or “Unsettled”?
 - “Controversial” or “Uncontroversial”?
 - Presence of a “dominant paradigm” or a (political) “watchword”?
 - Potential shift of attention/priorities? (i.e. COVID-19)



Communicating Evidence-Informed Policy Advice

Science and politics

Consider the (government) actors and agencies involved:

- Practice/history related to use of science advice or expertise?
- Existing networks or specialized bodies for research translation?
 - Help define appropriate “messaging” (complexity) and “strategy” (channels, tools) for communication
- Important: Value in sharing the “method”?
 - If so then: Keep it as separate discussion ...
 - Don't go too far! (stick with the essentials, and policy uses)



Communicating Evidence-Informed Policy Advice

Science and politics

Consider the “human factor”:

- Policymakers do not have the ability to consider all information
 - Like everyone, they use heuristics and filters to process and select
- These “filters” are both:
 - **Rational** : Clear goals and preferences on source of information (uncertainty)
 - **Irrational** : Emotions, values, beliefs (ambiguity)
- **Must address/use both for effective policy communication**



Communicating Evidence-Informed Policy Advice

Science and politics

Consider the “human factor”: uncertainty & ambiguity

- Uncertainty: What we know/don't know about a topic (rational)
 - Providing evidence and facts help reduce “uncertainty”
- Ambiguity: How we “understand” or perceive a topic - through emotions, values, etc. (“irrational”)
 - Telling “stories” to provide a “persuasive reason” (reduce ambiguity)



Communicating Evidence-Informed Policy Advice

Science and politics

Consider the “human factor”: uncertainty & ambiguity

- Must address both:
 - Combine facts/evidence AND emotions (i.e. human aspect/story of the policy).
 - Emphasize on the key facts/evidence
 - Tell a simple story, easy to understand.
 - Use pre-existing beliefs
 - Highlight political value of proposal.
 - Act at the right time.



Communicating Evidence-Informed Policy Advice

How do we make sure evidence makes a difference

Social and political need – common identification of problem

Credible and contextually relevant evidence at the right time

Emotional response – needs a story which interacts with the reality of policy-makers

Relationship between producers, knowledge brokers, and policy-makers – and ideally co-production

Ian Goldman

Author of “Using evidence in policy and practice: Lessons from Africa”
South Africa



Communicating Evidence-Informed Policy Advice

Science and politics

Aligning and realigning with policy priorities

- Based on your knowledge of the current policy context.
- Based on the policy **actors in place** and interested/committed
 - Same as at beginning of project?
- Reflect on what is working, what is not
- It might be smart to wait ...



Adapting to specific contexts

Example of the Covid crisis



Differed dissemination in specific contexts

Context of COVID-19

- Most government resources are diverted to fight the pandemic.
- Consider how the crisis affects your specific context:
 - Is there room for discussing other policy issues?
 - Is your research still relevant, in a short-term perspective?
 - Does your policy proposal have **potential positive externalities** relevant to the current crisis ?
- If the context is right : adapt your communication strategy.



Differed dissemination in specific contexts

Context of COVID-19

- If the context isn't right : this may not be the best time to disseminate your work.
- If you choose to wait:
 - Context and policy landscape in 24 to 36 months?
 - Your team situation in 24 to 36 months?
- Plan accordingly and meanwhile: work your audience non stop.



Discussion – Advising policy in context of Covid

- In small groups (**30 minutes**):
 - Briefly describe your individual projects and related policy recommendations (**2 minutes each** – max **10 minutes**)
 - TOGETHER (**20 minutes**): Discuss potential positive externalities of your recommendations related to the current context
 - Choose 1 or 2 examples (of potential externalities) and assign a speaker
- Back in the main room (**20 minutes**):
 - Assigned speakers share their group's examples with all (**1-2 minutes each**)



Next - tomorrow

Learn how to
design an effective policy proposal (brief)

