

Policy engagement:

Review of best practices in conducting
policy-engaged research

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PEP mission To build research capacity in developing countries, and put this capacity to work where it is most needed, **to generate a relevant evidence base for development policy.**

Objectives Strengthen local capacity for high-quality **and policy-engaged research**

Produce new and reliable evidence through locally-based perspectives

Promote greater participation, visibility and influence of local expertise

Create or strengthen research-policy linkages



Introduction

Policy engagement: why is this useful to you?

Perspective

Better understand the manifold implications and potential uses of your research

Capacity

Build new skills in policy-responsive research and communication with non-academics

Exposure

Increased visibility and acknowledgement of your research AND expertise, i.e. build reputation as field experts

- Often result in new career opportunities, research funding or consultancy

Contacts

Extend your network to include several potential research users, for now or later, and people who can promote you



Introduction

Policy engagement: why is this useful to you?

PAGE I - impact

274 researchers:

52% experienced significant career-promoting event(s), (at least in part) due to involvement in PEP project

39% (events) resulted in greater involvement in policy processes

65 projects:

21 result in findings used to influence actual policy decisions

+13 referred to in official/public statements from policy makers that findings will be used to inform future policy



Introduction

PEP Grant Plus support program

Research

Design (proposal)

- Evaluation/ comments
- Int'l peer review
- Technical training

Policy
outreach

- Evaluation/comments
- **New:** Policy context analysis
- **New:** Workshop to review best practices for policy engagement

Research

- Scientific mentoring
- Technical assistance
- Evaluation/comments
- Int'l peer review
- Int'l study visit

- **New:** Mentor/guidance to design engagement strategy
- Evaluation/comments of policy conclusions
- Monitor consultations & dissemination

Publish/ Disseminate

- WP external review
- Assistance for journal submissions
- Int'l conference

- **New:** Workshop in research communication
- **New:** Mentor/guidance to define policy messages and dissemination strategy
- PEP policy brief
- National policy conference
- Monitor dissemination

Introduction

The new Policy Outreach Committee (POC)

PAGE II – 2016-2020

Among new investments to support policy engagement, PEP created a new structure: the **Policy Outreach Committee** (POC)

POC

Composed of experts in policy advocacy/advisory, based in regions/countries of PAGE projects

Mandate:

- Provide guidance and advisory to help teams design effective policy engagement and communication strategies

Addressing two main issues:

- Particularities of country/local contexts – institutions, structures and constraints
- **Weakness of policy conclusions/messages in PEP research**



Introduction

Milestones of POC support/mandate

Proposal

- Evaluation + comments on project's policy context analysis

Project starts

- Meeting to discuss stakeholder analysis, priority targets and engagement strategy

After interim report

- Meeting to discuss policy implications of preliminary findings and to review stakeholder analysis (in light of findings)

After final report / results

- Evaluation + comment paper's conclusions on policy implications of findings
- Meeting to help define policy messages and dissemination strategy



I - PEP reporting requirements and tools

- PEP monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system
- Technical report – what is it, how to use it & when to submit/update

II - Policy engagement

Step 1: Clearly establish the link between research & policy

- Research objective, related policy context, policy question, potential uses of results

Coffee break

Step 2: Identify & understand your target audiences & policy processes

- Types of stakeholders (+ roles & positions), timing and types of contexts to engage

Step 3: Engage with your audiences

- How to reach, types of interactions, prepare/manage your consultations
- Report your consultations to PEP

Lunch break



III - Forum

- Your comments, questions and experiences

IV – Conduct policy-oriented research

- Considering and reporting policy implications, cost-benefit analysis

IV – Communicate research with non-academics (a preview)

- Focus on policy messages and adapt to audience,
- Identify and engage with potential channels
- Report dissemination



PEP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Requirements and tools



- **Why?**

- Donald Trump, Brexit, and the idea of value for money
- Competing for funding – must demonstrate impact

- **The endgame for PEP?**

- Capacity building and impact
- By reporting the most compelling story based on your research and experience
 - Important elements of a compelling story:
 - Improvement
 - Engagement
 - Change



PEP's M&E

- **Monitoring:** tracking of the progress through the technical report
 - An opportunity for us to continually learn from the experience and multiplicity of contexts of PEP researchers/projects
- **Evaluation:** qualitative and quantitative
 - On donor's request, PEP is now implementing a **new self-evaluation system**
 - A series of indicators derived from lessons learned through the monitoring and evaluation system of PAGE I, linked to a “scoring/rating system”
 - Measuring each project's outcomes in terms of research quality, capacity building and policy outreach
 - To evaluate PEP's performance in supporting the achievement of these outcomes



PEP's M&E tool: **Technical report** (on PEP intranet)

- To track progress and impact of the non-research aspects of your projects, including policy engagement
 - Helps plan and make sense of the engagement and dissemination process

Six technical report forms - demonstration

Your PEP profile – linked in all PEP communications online (website, newsletter, social media), which benefit from a large audience

- **54 policy briefs from PAGE I projects** ➔ **26,300 downloads** from the PEP website **since 2015**
- **KEEP YOUR PEP PROFILE UPDATED**



Requirements and tools

Calendar of technical reports

Each grant payment is conditional to satisfactory outputs, incl. technical report

Corresponding milestones: Proposal, Interim report, Final report, WP/PB,

If you apply for national and/or international [conference grants](#), you will also be required to **update** the technical report, as well as to submit an **ex-post conference report**

Projects with [data collection](#) (longer duration) have more grant payments, and thus **more updates** to provide

Technical report FORMS	Grant 1	Grant 2	Grant 3	Grant 4 (WP/PB)	Grant 5 (Nat conf)	Grant 6 (Int'l conf)
Capacity building	1 st	Update	Update	Update	Update	Update
Consultation	1 st	Update	Update	Update	Update	Update
Dissemination	Strategy only	Pre-1 st (if any)	1 st (official)	Update	Update	Update
Impact			Pre-1 st (if any)	1 st	Update	Update

PEP Technical Report

CAPACITY BUILDING FORM



POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Step 1

Clearly establish the link between
your research and policy



Policy engagement

Step 1 - Link research and policy

Link your research to policy

- While designing research, must **define mission/objective**
 - PEP supports POLICY RESEARCH, i.e. objective is to provide evidence base for policy
 - Must identify the policy that the research aims to inform

The key is:

“.... thinking what the outcomes should be, and then putting together the steps.”



Policy engagement

Step 1 - Link research and policy

- **Policy context analysis** – to help understand:
 - Socioeconomic background/context of research issue
 - Related policy initiatives – past, current and/or envisaged (lessons learned & trends)
 - Current knowledge gaps and needs (of evidence)
 - Who's involved (stakeholders and potential research users)
 - We'll come back to stakeholder analysis in step 2



Policy engagement

Overview of policy context analysis

Topic	Subtopic	Question	Policy Context	Key informants
Educational quality	Teacher career	How has the labour market of teachers evolved in the last decade? To what extent do the mechanisms of promotion support the development of long term careers?	The teachers' union is promoting a new law for teacher's salaries and ranking.	Teacher union representatives Members of the legislative Ministry of Education
	Education budget	How efficient is the allocation of the educational budget? What rules can be used to decentralize the national budget to the provinces?	There is a decentralization process in place for services such as education.	Finance Ministry Planning Secretary Local governments

Policy engagement

Step 1 - Link research and policy

Policy context analysis – main sources:

- Literature review
 - Broad understanding of the topic and localized application of existing research
- **Consultation or analysis of stakeholders**

Why consult? The “human factor”

- Better understand positions and needs
- Validate or adjust/define research question/agenda
- Increase sense of ownership, and thus chances of assimilation of evidence in stakeholder decisions/practice



Policy engagement

Step 1 - Link research and policy

Analyzing the policy context and stakeholders of your research agenda will also:

- Help define the nature of potential use(s) of your findings

Type of use	Contribution of research findings
Instrumental	Direct contribution to public policy decision making
Conceptual	May foster change in understanding/thinking about issue and related courses of action
Political	Evidence can be used to legitimize (gain support or limit opposition for) a certain position or course of action



Policy engagement

Step 1 - Link research and policy

➤ And from there, identify your stakeholder-focused outcomes/objectives

Outcome	Points to consider
1 Interest of key stakeholders; getting issues on to the policy agenda	How interested and open are policy actors to your issues? What kind of evidence will convince them?
2 Public opinion	How does the public engage in these issues?
3 Capacity and engagement of other actors	Who else is engaging in this policy area? How influential are they? What can be done to involve others?
4 Change in discourse among policy actors and commentators	What are the influential policy actors saying on this issue? What language are they using?
5 Improvements in policy-making procedure/process	Who is consulted during policy-making? How is evidence taken into account?
6 Change (or no change) in policy content	What new legislation, budgets, programmes or strategies are being developed?
7 Behaviour change for effective implementation	Who is involved in implementing targeted policies? Do they have the skills, relationships and incentives to deliver?
8 Networks and systems for supporting delivery	Are different actors working coherently together to implement policy? Are the necessary structures and incentives in place to facilitate this?
9 Relationships between actors	Do bonds of trust exist between different actors?



Policy engagement

Step 1 - Link research and policy

Must identify and keep in mind the expected use(s) of findings to guide / inform engagement strategy

In the end, a good “policy influence objective” should be clear on:

- **Why** the changes you are proposing are important,
- **Who** they affect,
- **What** needs to be done about it, and
- **Where** you stand in relation to others who are also trying to bring about change

And this objective should inform the formulation of the research policy question



Formulating your policy question..

- **Consistent:**
 - Must relate to the purpose of the study (policy influence objective)
 - but at the same time allow you the scope to satisfy the learning outcomes of the course.
- **Manageable:** Be realistic about the scope and scale of the project. The question you ask must be within your ability to tackle.
- **Clear and simple:** avoid crowding your question with too many concepts
 - For those who have many questions, they should be topped by an all-encompassing one
- **Interesting**
 - This will also practice your research communication skills



COFFEE BREAK



POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Step 2

Identify and understand your audiences
and relevant policy processes



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

“... By understanding political context better – and then responding appropriately – it is possible to maximize the chances of policy influence.”

- Julius Court & Lin Cotterrell



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Assumptions using components of

- World Bank: Expected Utility Stakeholder Model
- UNDP: Institutional and Context Analysis

1. Political will is measurable by identifying:

- Key decision makers and other stakeholders
and the incentives for them to act
- Their constituencies
- The potential cost (political mainly)
- Constraints (individual, by sector, etc.)
- Some events signal a potential commitment



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Assumptions by

- World Bank: Expected Utility Stakeholder Model
- UNDP: Institutional and Context Analysis

2. Measuring political will is vital to:

- Securing consensus
- Mobilizing critical support
- Not alienating crucial clients



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Types of stakeholders

- Decision maker
 - **Government**
- Analyst
 - **Think tanks, government**
- Advisor
 - **Interest groups, academics, special government entities**
- Advocacy
 - **NGO, civil society groups**



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Timing of policy process

- **Agenda setting:**
 - Awareness of and priority given to an issue or problem.
 - The issues must be recognized as significant problems, and policymakers must be able to provide a solution in a wider political environment (election, public opinion, etc..)
- **Policy formulation:**
 - How (analytical and political) options and strategies are constructed.
 - Level of rationality of decisions?
- **Decision-making:**
 - The ways decisions are made about alternatives
- **Policy implementation**
- **Policy evaluation / revision**



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Stakeholder analysis

- Who needs to know about the research
- What are their positions and interests
- How should the research be presented and framed



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Stakeholder analysis

High power 5-10		10 – Office of Prime Minister 9 - Ministry/institution in charge of policy 8 – Policy evaluation unit 7 – 6 -	
0-5 Low power		5 – World Bank country office 4 – Private sector 3 - NGO concerned with issue 2 – Civil society group 1 – Media	
	Opposed 0-3	Neutral 4-6	In favor 7-10

4 categories in the standard model, 6 in the PEP model



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Stakeholder analysis

High power 5-10	Don't alienate Consult	Keep satisfied Inform, sensitize	Manage closely Engage Consult
0-5 Low power		Monitor Raise interest, sensitize If organized, can be powerful	Keep informed
	Opposed 0-3	Neutral 4-6	In favor 7-10

4 categories in the standard model, 6 in the PEP model



Influencing the policy process

- **Key questions:**
 - How can policymakers best use research and move towards evidence-based policymaking;
 - How can researchers best use their findings in order to influence policy;
 - How can the interaction between researchers and policymakers be improved?
- Five dimensions to explore these questions



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Influencing the policy process

- **Dimension 1:** key macro-political issues

- (i) Extent of democracy/political freedom
- (ii) Extent of academic freedom
- (iii) Extent of media freedom
- (iv) Extent of development commitment of ruling elite (especially to the poorest)
- (v) Extent of culture of evidence use
- (vi) Extent civil society groups have an input into the making of policy
- (vii) Extent of political volatility
- (viii) Extent of conflict or insecurity



Influencing the policy process

- **Dimension 2:** Specific policy issues

- (i) Stage of the policy process
 - Agenda setting
 - Formulation
 - Implementation
 - Monitoring and evaluation
- (ii) Extent of policymaker demand
- (iii) Extent of policymaker consensus
- (iv) Extent there is a 'climate of rationality'
- (v) Strength of special interests for or against
- (vi) Extent of openness in decision making on this issue
- (vii) Importance of issue to society



Influencing the policy process

- **Dimension 3:** Policy implementation

- (i) Extent of transparency
- (ii) Extent of accountability
- (iii) Extent of contestation in implementation
- (iv) Extent of flexibility in implementation
- (v) Extent of corruption
- (vi) Extent bureaucrats have capacity to understand research
- (vii) Institutional incentives to encourage research utilisation
- (viii) Institutional mechanisms to draw in evidence in implementation
- (ix) Feasibility of new approach
- (x) Legitimacy of new approach



Influencing the policy process

- **Dimension 4:** Decisive moments in the policy process

- (i) Character of the policy processes regarding the issue:
 - Routine – repeats previous decisions
 - Incremental – deals selectively with small issues as they arise
 - Fundamental – opportunity to re-think approaches to policy domains
 - Emergent – new policy issues
- (ii) To what extent is the policy process (and thus opportunities to influence it) predictable?
- (iii) Is the budget process predictable?
- (iv) Is there a policy window?
- (v) To what extent is there a sense of policy crisis?



Influencing the policy process

- **Dimension 5: The way policymakers think**

- (i) Extent policy objectives are clear
- (ii) Extent cause-effect relationships are clear
- (iii) Extent of openness to new evidence
- (iv) Capacity to process information
- (v) Extent policymakers in this area are motivated by
 - Public interests
 - Personal interests
 - Special interests
- (ii) What convinces policymakers?
 - Recognition from own experience
 - Scenarios, stories and arguments
 - Moral and ethical values
 - Empirical data
 - Ideology, personal interests are crucial (evidence doesn't matter)

“Policy process is characterized by uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity; individual policy actors neither have perfect information about problems and alternatives nor perfect computational abilities”



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Tool: Policy matrix

	Agenda		Formulation		Implementation		M&E	
Government	/	5	/	5	/	4	0	3
Parliament	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	1
Private sector	/	1	/	2	/	4	/	3
Implementing agencies	0	1	/	3	/	5	/	4
Academic community	0	1	/	5	/	1	0	1
Unions	0	1	0	1	/	3	/	4
International actors	/	5	/	4	/	5	/	3
Media	0	1	/	1	/	4	0	5
General public	0	1	0	1	/	3	0	5

Rating in terms of level of interest in reform success: / = interested in positive outcome, 0 = not interested in positive outcome.

Rating in terms of extent of influence on the reform process: 5 = very high; 4 = significant; 3 = some; 2 = very little; 1 = almost none.

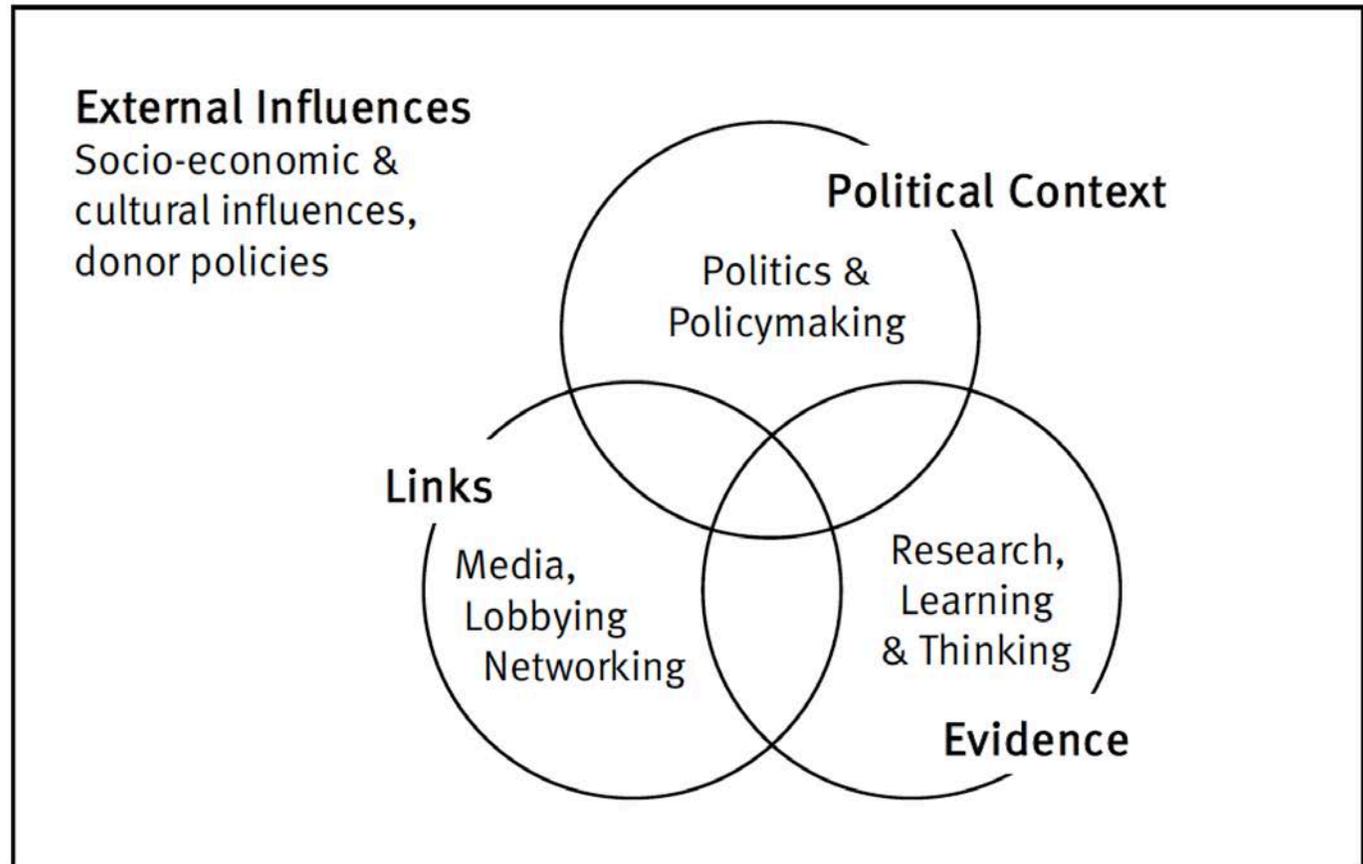


Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Tool: Context, Evidence, Links Framework

From ODI –
RAPID programme



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Tool: Context, Evidence, Links Framework

Types of questions to help you define...

CONTEXT

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

Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Tool: Context, Evidence, Links Framework

Types of questions
to help you define...

EVIDENCE

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



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Tool: Context, Evidence, Links Framework

Types of questions
to help you define...

LINKS

1. Who are the key stakeholders?
2. Who are the experts?
3. What links and networks exist between them?
4. What roles do they play? Are they intermediaries between research and policy?
5. Whose evidence and research do they communicate?
6. Which individuals or institutions have significant power to influence policy?
7. Are these policy actors and networks legitimate? Do they have a constituency among the poor?



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Tool: Context, Evidence, Links Framework

Types of questions
to help you define...

External
Environment

1. Who are the key stakeholders?
2. Who are the experts?
3. What links and networks exist between them?
4. What roles do they play? Are they intermediaries between research and policy?
5. Whose evidence and research do they communicate?
6. Which individuals or institutions have significant power to influence policy?
7. Are these policy actors and networks legitimate? Do they have a constituency among the poor?



Policy engagement

Step 2: Audiences & policy process

Tool: Force Field Analysis



POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Step 3

Engage with your audiences



How to reach your targets? No magic bullet...

- What we've learned at PEP: **find champion(s)**
- **Media** can also help
 - In both cases you need to “sell”, which requires good communication (we'll come back to this in the afternoon)
- Learn from other success stories in your country - [take advantage of PEP](#)



Policy engagement

Step 3: Engage with audiences

Overview of steps in policy engagement

- **Step 1: Identify**
 - Important stakeholders and their interests + relative power/influence
 - Identify potential risks associated with each **and select** (sometimes less is more)
- **Step 2: Develop strategy**
 - Determine level and timing of engagement with key/target stakeholders
 - Determine each stakeholder's needs and related appropriate project's response
 - Develop strategy on how to build stakeholder participation and commitment
- **Step 3: Prepare....**



Policy engagement

Step 3: Engage with audiences

Some concepts from steps 1 and 2 to clarify...

Risks to consider when engaging:

- appropriate channels to engage,
- possible opposition (negative reaction, attempts to block..)
- risk of transfer of “ownership”

Timing of engagement:

- E.g. Consultation/design or dissemination?

Levels of engagement: How much do you want to engage?

- Inform/advise, consult, involve, collaborate, empower (co-production).. ?
 - The deeper you engage, the more you increase chances of uptake, but also the more you concede control over research decisions



Policy engagement

Step 3: Engage with audiences

Some concepts from steps 1 and 2 to clarify...

Engagement levels:

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Stakeholder engagement goal	To provide balanced, objective, accurate and consistent information to assist stakeholders to understand the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain feedback from stakeholders on analysis, alternatives and/or outcomes.	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and needs are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the stakeholder including the development of alternatives, making decisions and the identification of preferred solutions.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the stakeholder.

Policy engagement

Step 3: Engage with audiences

Step 3: Prepare

Select appropriate method to engage, according to chosen level

- **Inform**: policy brief, fact sheets, websites
- **Consult**: public comments/statements, focus group, survey, interviews and meetings (to obtain feedback)
- **Involve**: workshops (deliberative), periodic meetings, exchanges, seek support in future dissemination
- **Collaborate and empower**: propose partnership, joint planning and co-production

Both the level and method of engagement may vary and depend on timing (stage of research cycle)



Step 3: Prepare

- **Consider logistics/organization/costs:**
 - Venue, resources, responsibilities
- **Prepare communications with each:**
 - Prepare guiding questions when approaching stakeholders
 - See a few examples next...
 - Develop strategies for dealing with congruent as well as divergent comments/views and priorities.
 - Some tips on communicating research with non-academics in the afternoon.



Policy engagement

Step 3: Engage with audiences

Step 3: Prepare

Examples of guiding questions

- Ⓞ What are the key policy issues around this topic in your institution?
- Ⓞ What are the challenges that you are facing for implementing this policy or program?
- Ⓞ Are you planning on implementing a new program or project to tackle this issue?
- Ⓞ Are there any specific ways research could add value to these policy processes?
- Ⓞ Would a particular type of project be particularly useful for your organization?
- Ⓞ Is there anybody else working on these issue that you find interesting to talk to?



Policy engagement

Step 3: Engage with audiences

Step 4: Manage your consultations

- **Document:** collect and monitor “artifacts” from interactions with stakeholders
 - Email exchanges
 - Meetings:
 - presentations,
 - list of attendees,
 - minutes or attendance notes + review comments and approvals,
 - emails to key absentees
 - Updates: Prepare and circulate status reports on critical issues



Step 4: Manage your consultations

- **Analyse and make best use of stakeholder's inputs**
 - If views and insights converge:
 - Are we being too obvious?
 - Is everyone understanding in a similar fashion?
 - Should we include other voices?
 - If views and insights diverge:
 - Do we understand/affect stakeholders' interests?
 - Is this a contested political issue?
 - Are we diverging on the topic, the question, the method, etc..



PEP Technical Report

CONSULTATION FORM



LUNCH BREAK



FORUM

Your questions, comments and experiences

We are aware that you are best judge of your own constraints, country, situation

PEP is global and must thus work with a great variety of contexts – so speak in general/generic terms.

We try to learn from other/specialized international organizations, as well as from your experiences (technical reports).

Over to you!

- What are your policy contexts – macro or specific issues that may present obstacles to policy engagement?
- Examples or suggestions on how to reach targets?
- Some have experience of PEP national policy conferences, what can you say about it?



Conduct and communicate policy-oriented research



Policy-oriented research

Use the **policy inputs from your consultations** to adjust your research questions/ agenda

While conducting research, never lose sight of the **expected uses of your findings for policy**

- Present and discuss your **preliminary findings** with key users

Always keep in mind that, in the end, your findings should allow you to formulate clear **policy messages or recommendations**

- Try formulating these at interim stage, and discuss them with your POC mentor to ensure best end result (in final paper)
- Consider the **cost-benefit analysis**

Policy recommendations should be REALISTIC, USEFUL and ACTIONABLE



Policy-oriented research

Cost-benefit analysis: a necessary tool for decision-making

One key aspect to consider when formulating policy recommendations

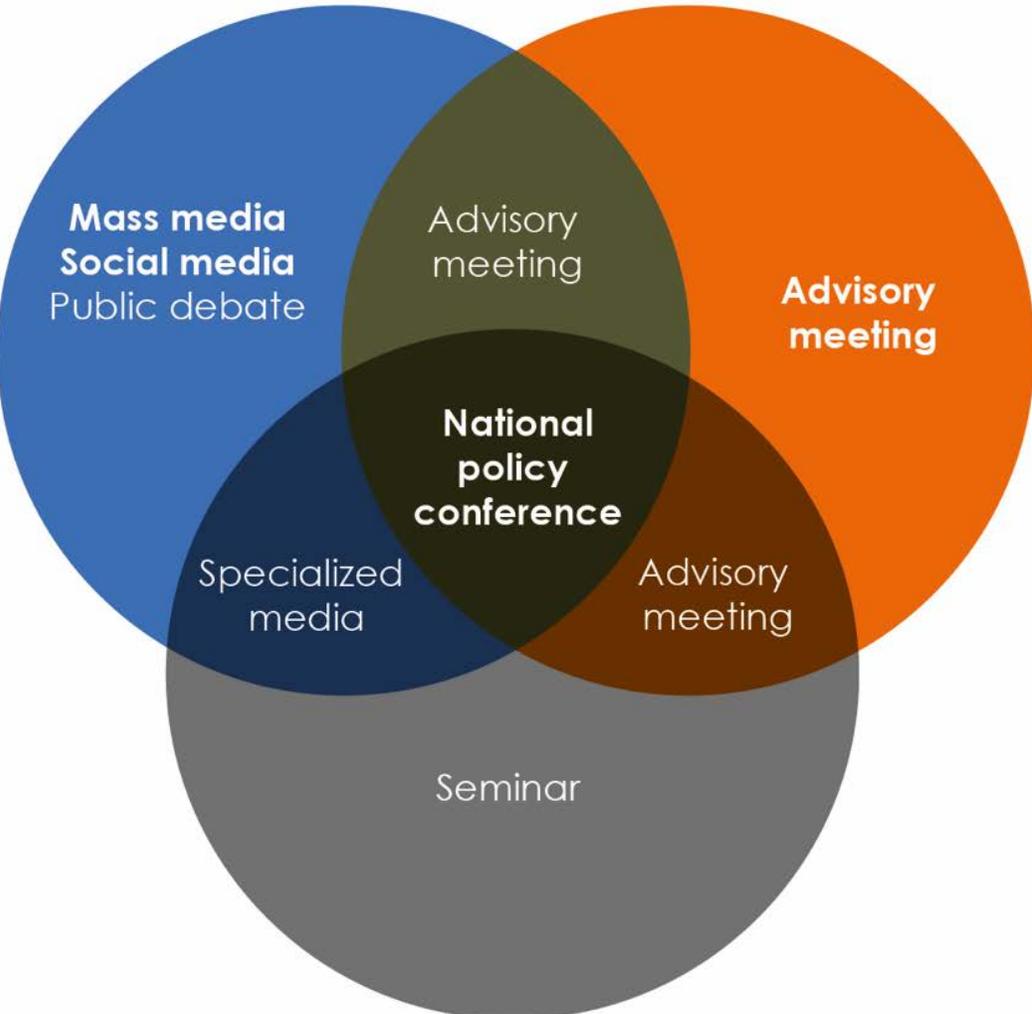
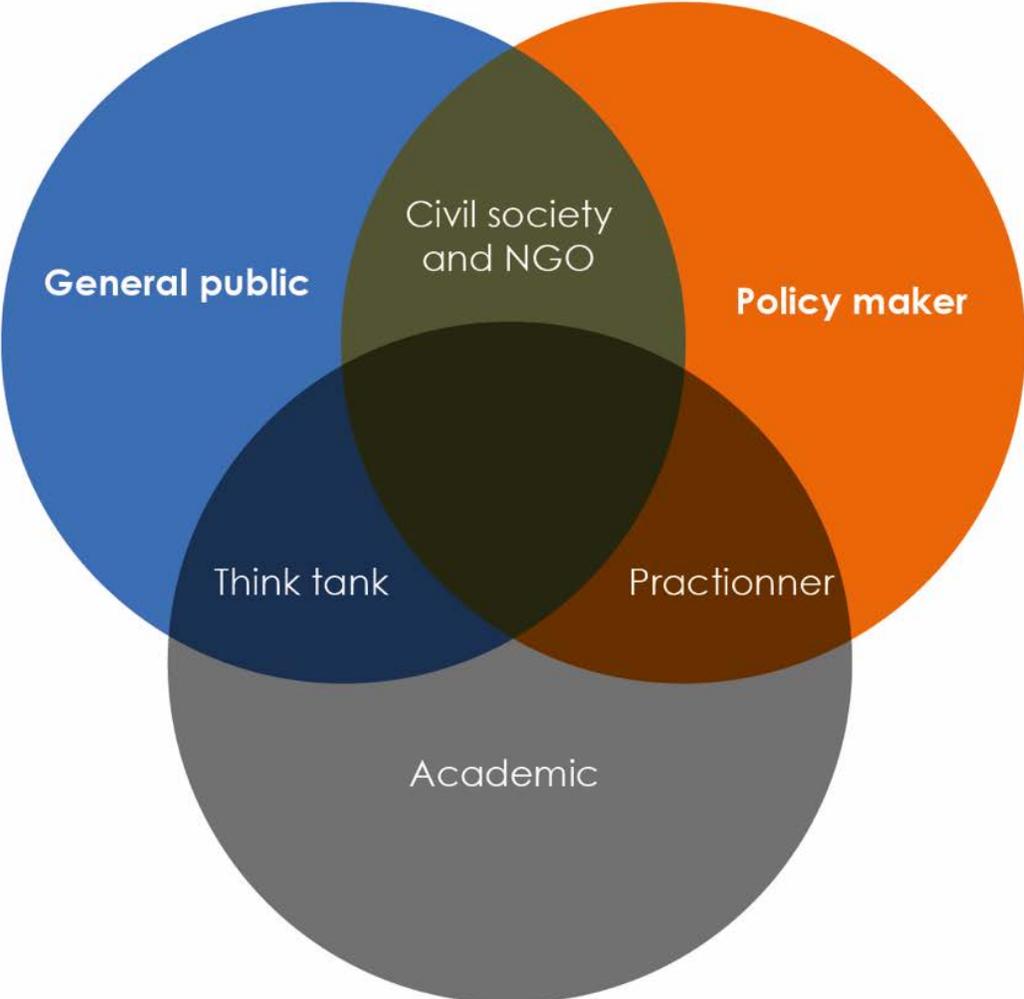
- **the COST of the intervention, change, or even the status quo that you advise**
 - In terms of resources/budget and option value, incl. political risks
 - Versus benefits and/or alternatives

And the key points/conclusions of this analysis should be communicated along with your evidence-based recommendations...



Research communication

Platforms



Research communication

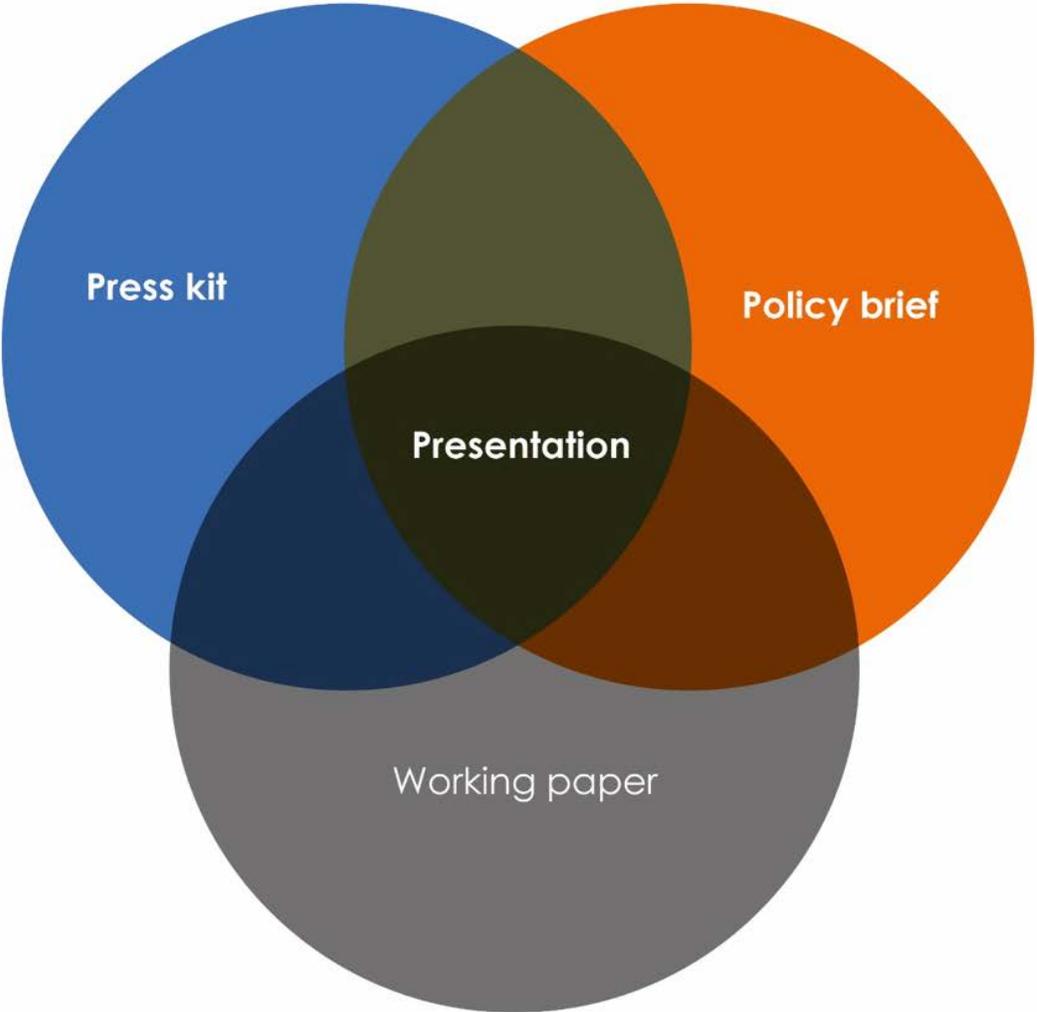
Platforms/media analysis

High power 5-10			
0-5 Low power			
	Opposed 0-3	Neutral 4-6	In favor 7-10



Research communication

Tools



Research communication

Studies by ODI show that:

- 65% of policy makers point to **the lack of dissemination of research findings** to explain poor research uptake
- 79% of respondents (developed and developing countries) point to the **policy brief as an essential tool** to disseminate findings
- 50% of **policy actors use existing relationships** (researchers) to learn about new issues.
- On average, policy actors spend 45 minutes reviewing a policy brief



Communications

Communicate research with non-academics

Adapting your message



Key questions to ask yourself

- Who is your audience?
 - National policymaker / advocacy group / regional newspaper
- What is important to them?
 - Improving education outcomes / ensuring children have a good childhood and get a good education / new stories affecting local people
- What do you want (and can reasonably expect) them to do about it?
 - Inform national policy / put pressure on policymakers and offer support to stakeholders / raise awareness of the issue



Abstract (academic audience)

Aim

Data In this study we analyze the impact of domestic and market child labor on learning using Prova Brazil census data from 2007 and 2011. To do that, we created a large panel

dataset with students in 5th and 9th Grades. To measure the impact of children working in

Method the market and/or in their households on Portuguese and Mathematics test scores, we estimated fixed effect models. An instrumental variable approach, proposed by

Lewbel, was applied to the models to control for the endogeneity of child **Results** possible attrition bias was taken into account through inverse probability weights. Results show that

the work performed by children either in the household, or in the labor market was detrimental to their academic performance, with working only in the labor market

showing the largest impact for both girls and boys, followed by working both in the market and inside the house, and by working in the house alone.



Communications

Adapting your message

For a policymaker e.g. official at Ministry of Education

Aim (policymaker)

To improve education outcomes, including literacy rates and years of education, and to bring Brazil in line with **Policy** (change) can countries in these respects, efforts need to be made to reduce the number of hours that **How + Reasoning** whether in the labor market or at home. Extending the school day would encourage additional time spent in education and reduce the time children spend on household chores or in work. Increasing social assistance programs, such as the Bolsa Familia, can provide important sources of income for poor families while being conditional on children's attendance at school.



Communications

Adapting your message

For advocacy group e.g. child protection NGO

Issue

Work, whether at home or in the labor market, is detrimental to children's academic performance – and their future. Although detrimental to school performance than working in the labor market, domestic work also has a negative effect on education outcomes and can lead to students dropping out of school. Parents need to be made aware so that they encourage their children to focus on school. Families currently relying on the children to bring in additional income should be referred to social assistance programs, such as the Bolsa Familia, which can provide financial aid, provided the children attend school.



Communications

Adapting your message

For media e.g. regional newspaper

Issue

Too many hours spent helping **Source** (regional interest) children's school performance, according to a new study by researchers at the University of Sao Paulo. Time spent on domestic chores is usually not included in child work statistics as it is considered necessary for teaching children household responsibilities.

How **New info + simple stats** impact of child labor on school performance found that for each hour of chores (per day), the students' test **Direct quote** (personal) much as 2.4%. Ana Kassouf, the lead researcher on the study, said: "As academic performance decreases, students become less engaged in their education and more likely to drop out."



Things to consider

- **Not everyone needs to know everything**
 - Too much information dilutes your message
 - Be strategic
 - Scientific method (e.g. instrumental variables) only for academic audiences
 - Media focus on new information
- **Structure** – where to start?
 - Which aspect of study/findings/recommendations is most interesting to target audience?



For PEP

- International policy research organization
- General audience
 - Particularly funders, analysts and researchers
- PEP dissemination tools for findings and policy recommendations
 - PEP policy brief
 - PEP website & social media



For PEP

- Content for PEP Policy Brief
 - Key messages
 - Recommendations & findings
 - Simple
 - Not scientific
 - Brief context summary
 - Data & methodology summary
 - Key findings
 - Summary
 - Key statistics
- Policy recommendations
 - Based **directly** on findings
 - General aim (e.g. reduce hours worked by children)
 - Concrete suggestions (e.g. extend school day)
 - Address common issues (e.g. families rely on income from children)



PEP Policy Brief: Common pitfalls

- **Too detailed**

- Aim for 1000 words
 - Context: 300
 - Data & methodology: 200
 - Key findings: 250
 - Policy recommendations: 250

- **Too scientific**

- General audience
- Simple language
- Still accurate

- **Not enough policy**

- Comes from research
- Start with strong policy question



PEP Policy Brief: It's about policy!

- Recommendations come from the research
- Good policy question from beginning of project
- **What is a good policy question?**
 - Direct **policy** analysis
 - Not the research question



The policy question: It's about policy!

- **Example**

- The Serbian government introduced austerity measures following a high fiscal deficit.
 - Include reducing public sector wages.
- Significantly more women work in the public sector than men.
- This austerity measure may violate Serbia's gender equality law.
- The government introduced a gender equality strategy the same year
 - To increase gender equality through equal opportunity policies
 - To address the gender pay gap.



The policy question: It's about policy!

- **Policy question(s)**

- The answer will provide concrete policy recommendations
 - *Are the austerity measures working against the country's gender equality policy?*
 - *If so, what can be done within the context of austerity?*

- **Research question(s)**

- Assess the situation to answer policy question
 - *What impact do the austerity measures have on the gender pay gap?*
 - *What are the key factors that influence the gender pay gap?*



PEP Policy Brief: A starting point

- Tool for PEP
- Modify to your needs
 - In your language
 - Adapt content
- **Create new tool(s)** – how to best reach your audience?
 - Policy note
 - Website or blog
 - Video (presentation)
 - Poster/flyer with infographics

More details next year

but ask us for help at any time!



For next (technical) sessions

PHP FORUM

How to use..



Thank you !

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