



2021 PEP annual conference

Workshop:

Best practices for policy communication

Session 3: Strategizing your communications

May 27

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PEP Communication Team

Session 3 - Contents

1. Creating an effective dissemination package

- **Tools & Channels** - choosing the right ones for your audience
- **Adapt & Visualise** your message for your audience

2. Your PEP Policy Brief



Where you're starting

1. Policy messages identified

2. Target audiences identified

Stakeholder analysis – Consultations – Anyone else?



Objectives (where you want to go)

1. Why do you want to share your research?

- Inform (upcoming) policymaking
- Modify existing programme/policy

2. What do you want your audience to do about it?



Tools & channels

How you present your information can make all the difference



Picture by Jorge Martin

- Tools & channels



Tools: what you produce to share your message

What tools can you use to share your message?

policy brief

press release

conference invitation

video

slide presentation

social media post

speech

infographic

blog/op-ed



Tools: what you produce to share your message

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Tools

What are they best for?

policy brief

press release

conference invitation

slide presentation

social media post

blog/op-ed



Tools: Which is best for what?

Tool	Purpose	Audience
policy brief	Advocate for policy recommendations and provide analysis & context	Policymakers, stakeholders
slide presentation	Advocate for policy recommendations and provide analysis & context	Policymakers, stakeholders, media
conference invitation	Entice people to attend your event	Policymakers, stakeholders, media
press release	Get media to share your policy recommendations	The media, wider public
blog/op-ed	Advocate for your policy recommendations	Your (extended) field, the media
social media post	Share your policy recommendations widely, engage in debate	Your network, the internet



Tools & channels

Where can you share these tools?

policy brief

press release

conference invitation

slide presentation

social media post

blog/article



Channels

Where can you share these tools?

policy brief

press release

conference invitation

social media post

slide presentation

blog/article

national policy
conference

private **meetings**

social media
(personal/institutional)

media (web/print
/broadcast)



Communications channels & tools

Audience

Specific
person/group

- Public**
- General
 - Special interest

Channels

private **meetings**

national policy
conference

media (web/print
/broadcast)

social media
(personal/institutional)

Written tools

policy brief (from
paper)

slide **presentation**

conference **invitation**

press release

blog/article

social media **post**



Adapting your message

1. Your audience

- What do they know?
- What do they care about?

Enforcing the 2016 Land Act within communities will help more women make decisions over inputs and harvests.



Adapting your message: Knowledge & Interests

Ministry of Women	Ministry of Agriculture
<p>Know: decision-making power is vital to empowerment</p> <p>Know: empowered women = good for household productivity & well-being</p> <p>Interest: promoting women's empowerment</p>	<p>Know: higher agricultural productivity means higher rural income and better food security</p> <p>Interest: boosting agricultural productivity</p>



Adapting your message: Knowledge & Interests

Ministry of Women

Enforcing the 2016 Land Act within communities will **empower** more **women** to **make decisions** over inputs and harvests.

Ministry of Agriculture

Enforcing the 2016 Land Act within communities will **increase agricultural productivity** and **improve food security**.



Adapting your message

2. Different tools and channels have different rules

- Choose based on:
 - Audience
 - Objective

- Look for “good” examples

Tweets and slide presentations are not interchangeable!



Adapting your message: Tools

Tool	Message
policy brief	Land reform to increase women's access to agricultural land can improve food security in Nigeria
slide presentation	Land reform to increase women's access to agricultural land can improve food security in Nigeria
conference invitation	Find out how women-focused land reform can improve food security in Nigeria
press release	Increasing women's access to farmland through land reform is a vital step to reducing hunger in Nigeria
blog/op-ed	Land reform that really empowers women is vital for improving food security in Nigeria
social media post	Risk of hunger rises when Nigeria's women are disempowered. Could land reform be the answer?



Adapting your message: Tools

Where is this from?

Op-ed/blog

Household surveys systematically exclude or undercount vulnerable populations and these exclusions and underestimations will materially affect estimates of need such as access to clean water or adequate sanitation, writes Ronelle Burger



Adapting your message: Tools

Where is this from?

Policy brief

Standalone solar home systems
and solar lamps, in addition to mini grids, can
increase electricity supply for women's
domestic and farm work



Adapting your message: Tools

Where is this from?

Social media

Use of chemical fertilizer needs to be done gradually... also important to make sure there are organic alternatives & alternate economic activities for affected industries



More about Social media posts

Advantage

- Broad audience

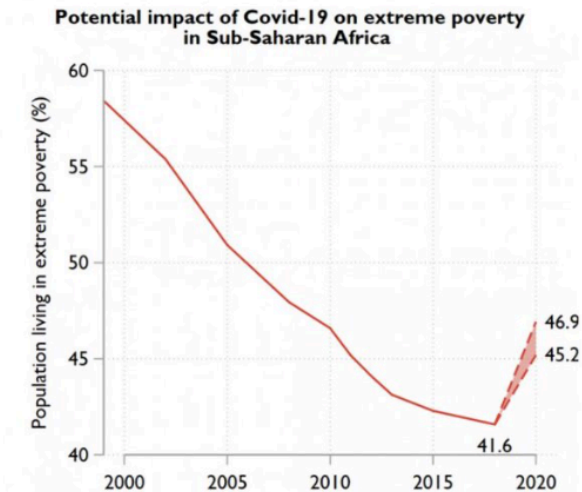
Disadvantages

- Lots of competition
- Limited space/text



ENDchildpoverty @globalcoalition · Apr 10

NEW blog post by [@oliver_fiala](#) | COVID-19 could push 30 million African children into poverty blogs.savethechildren.org.uk/?p=44350



Save the Children based on World Bank's PovcalNet database.
Reduction in consumption based on World Bank's 'Africa's Pulse', April 2020

Save the Children

Save the Children International and 2 others



More about **Social media posts**

Help your target audience see your message

- Tag them (personally or their institution)
- Use hashtags (your keywords)
- Reply to something on their feed (that is relevant)



Adapting your message: Visually

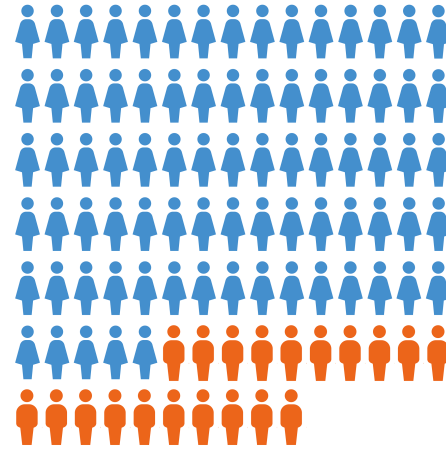
More ways to present your message



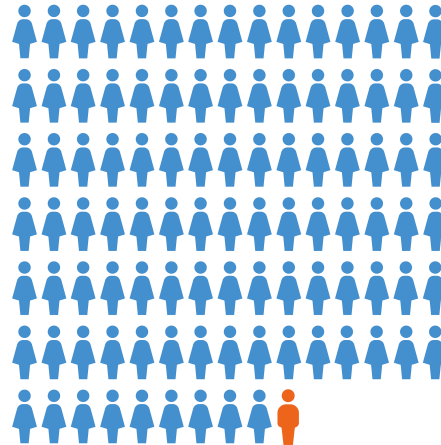
Visual tools

- Videos
- Illustration
- Infographics
- ...and more!

Domestic workers by gender



World



Uruguay



Picture by Jorge Martin



Visualizing contents

Visual tools

- Videos
- Illustration
- Infographics
- ...and more!

Unavoidable in today's communications..

People don't read anymore – everything is VISUAL

Policymakers access/process information just like everyone else!



Visualizing contents - texts



Start with your written documents

Ways to make texts more “visually attractive” = more effective read

1. **SHORT PARAGRAPHS** – separate ideas/sub-ideas
2. **Bullet lists** whenever you can
3. **Headlines** – titles/subtitles
4. **Colors, bold, CAPITAL** to emphasize key words/ideas
5. **Create SPACE around key ideas – make them EASY TO SPOT**

Visualizing contents - TEXTS

In Uruguay, 99% of the people employed in the domestic sector are women and the sector represents 13% of total female employment.

The predominance of women in the sector, combined with the traditional view that domestic work (cleaning, cooking, laundry and child/elderly care) is the responsibility of women, means that this occupation is undervalued and associated with low wages and high levels of informality.

While approximately 25% of all workers in Uruguay do not have social security coverage (considered “informal” workers), this figure rises to 46% for women in the domestic sector.



Visualizing contents - TEXTS

Domestic sector in Uruguay:

- 99% workers are women
- Represents 13% of total female employment.

Occupation is undervalued:

- Traditionally perceived as a “women’s job” (cleaning, childcare, etc.)
- Low wages and mostly informal work

Low social security coverage:

- Only 54% for female domestic workers
- Vs 80% for (all sectors) workers in Uruguay



Visualizing contents - TEXTS

Uruguay **DOMESTIC SECTOR**



99% women workers
13% of total female employment
Undervalued:
low wages & high informality

→ **46%** have no social security coverage



Visualizing contents - texts



Start with your written documents

Ways to make texts more “visually attractive” = more effective read

1. **SHORT PARAGRAPHS** – separate ideas/sub-ideas
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Visualizing contents – data visualization

Improve your graphs/figures

Should be **SIMPLE** and **CLEAR** = self-explanatory, quick read

➤ **DATA-INK ratio:**

- More color is not necessarily better (can confuse the brain)
- Add colors only if it facilitates understanding

➤ **Not ALL data is necessary to understand**

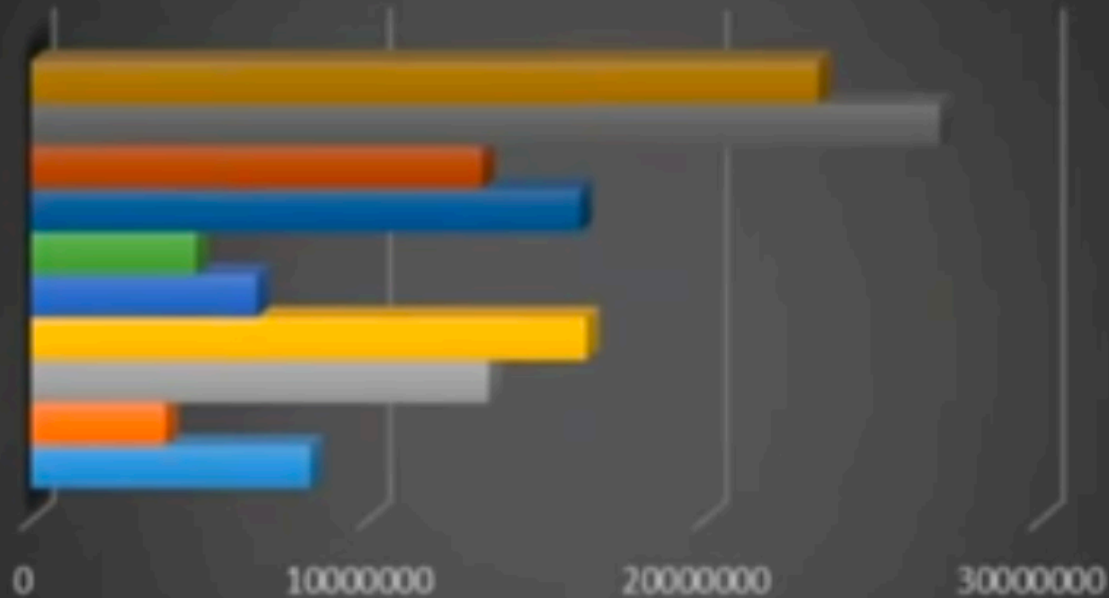
- Remove data that does not contribute to supporting argument

➤ **AVOID CLUTTERING** – the more “white space”, the better



Visualizing contents – data visualization

Sales by Salesperson

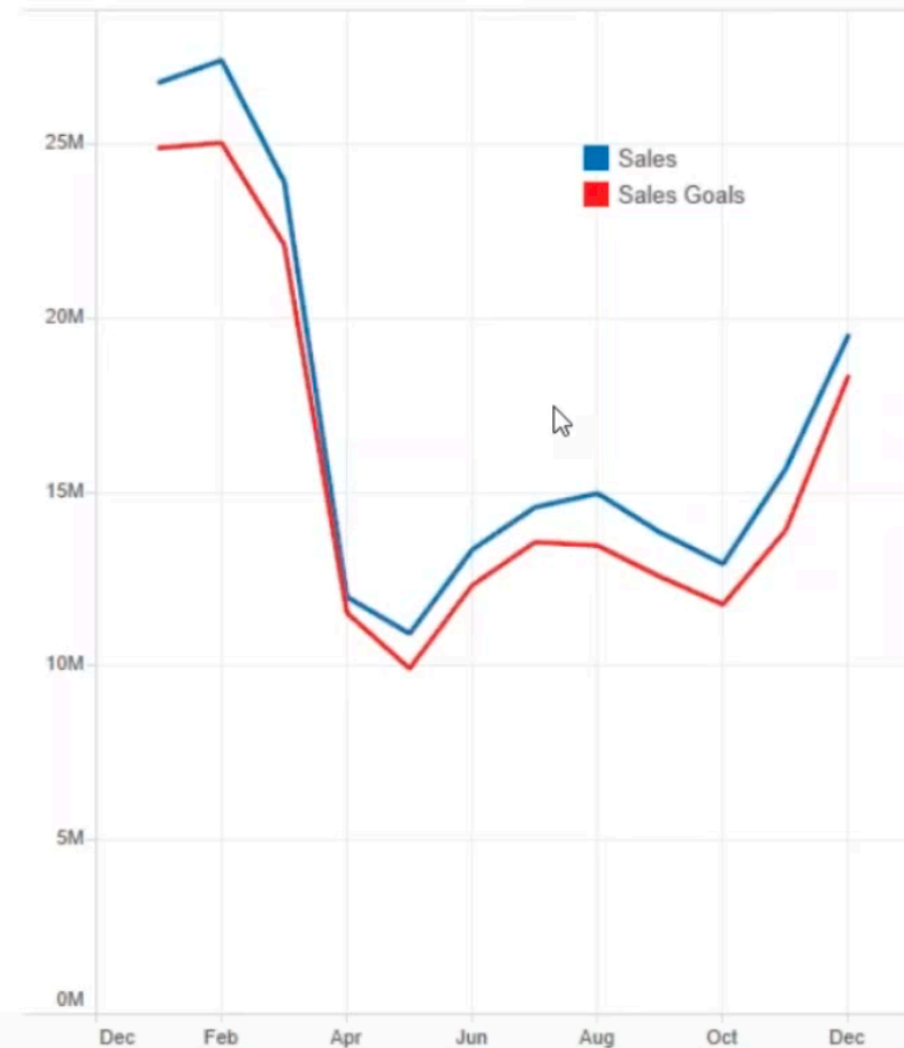


■ BENJAMIN CHO ■ CHARLIE BAY ■ EARL ATLAS ■ EARL WILL
■ HENRY ASTRO ■ JACKIE MARS ■ JOHN GALLON ■ PIERE TEE
■ RICK BAEVAR ■ WISTON TEXAS

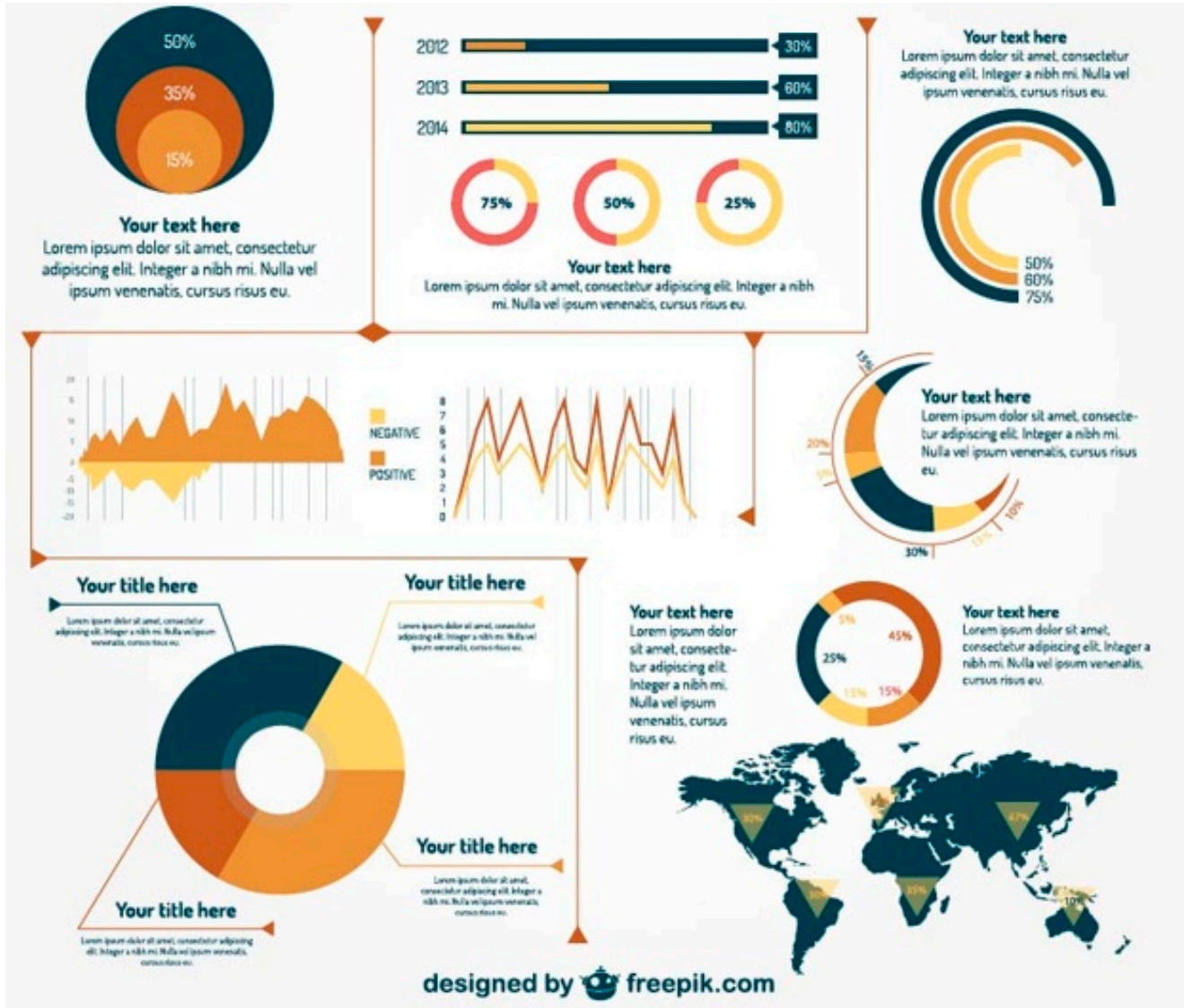
Sales by Salesperson



Visualizing contents – data visualization



Visualizing contents – data visualization



Choose the right type for your data..

Test it!!

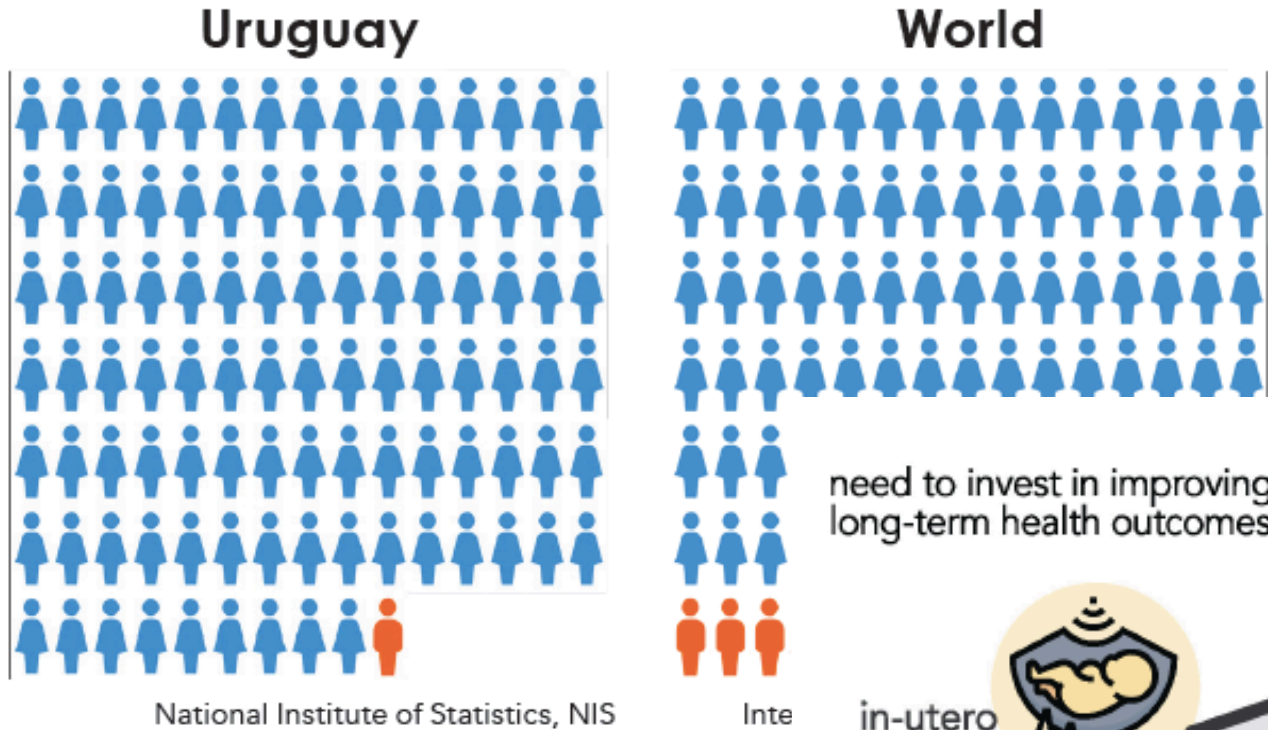
Web tools available!

TableauPublic, FusionCharts, Datawrapper...



Visualizing contents – infographics

Women in the domestic work sector (%)



Web tools available!
Canva, Venngage, Carto...

Qualitative

Quantitative



Visualizing contents – videos



Tell a story

- Give a human face
- Emotional appeal
- Define narrative

Web tools available!

Headliner, Clipchamp, Lumen5...

Powerful, but investment – time-consuming, costly



Your PEP Policy Brief



PEP Policy Brief

- A good policy brief should:
 - **Highlight “urgent” policy issue** that needs addressing
 - **Identify recommendations** (policies) that can address the issue
 - **Provide evidence/analysis** – justify why should your recommendations be applied?
 - **Provide insights/roadmap to policymakers** on what they need to know to formulate sound policy



PEP Policy Brief

- A good **PEP** policy brief is:
 - **2 to 4** pages
 - For a **non-scientific** audience
 - **Attractive** (pictures) and **accessible** (infographics)
 - **A starting point** for more specific/tailored policy briefs (in your language, if appropriate)
- **Key objective**
 - To highlight need for policy change and to present a viable policy option
- **Key target audience**
 - For PEP: general
 - For your project: Policy actor? NGO? Media? Adapt message!



PEP Policy Brief

- **Structure** (e.g. 3 pages)
 - Title
 - Key messages
 - Background/context – 1/4 page
 - Policy Options – 1/4 page
 - Brief policy comparison/evaluation – 1/2 page
 - Recommendation & road map – 1/2 page
 - Scientific analysis & findings summary – 1/2 page

While writing, keep in mind:

- Your objective
- Your target audience

**Plus photos, figures,
charts, infographics**



PEP Policy Brief

- **Title**
 - Not the same as your project title
 - Appeals to a more general audience
- For example, the working paper:
 - *Informal employment and labor market policies: The case of domestic workers in Uruguay*
- Becomes the policy brief:
 - *Uruguay's domestic workers boosted by minimum wage policy*

While writing, keep in mind:

- Your objective
- Your target audience



PEP Policy Brief

- **Key messages**

- 2 to 4 bullet points summarizing your key recommendations
- The “distilled” version – the absolute essentials:
 - Solution to what problem
 - Who is affected and how
 - Call to action

While writing, keep in mind:

- Your objective
- Your target audience



PEP Policy Brief

- **Background/context**

- About 150-200 words
- Present and explain issue
 - who's affected?
 - why is it a serious issue?
 - what are the risks of doing nothing?
- Show evidence need (e.g. knowledge gap)

While writing, keep in mind:

- Your objective
- Your target audience



PEP Policy Brief

- **Outline available policy options**

- ≈100 words
- Suggest a bullet list

- **Policy comparison**

- Most pertinent & interesting findings
- Max 500 words
- Suggest a table
- Simple illustrations

While writing, keep in mind:

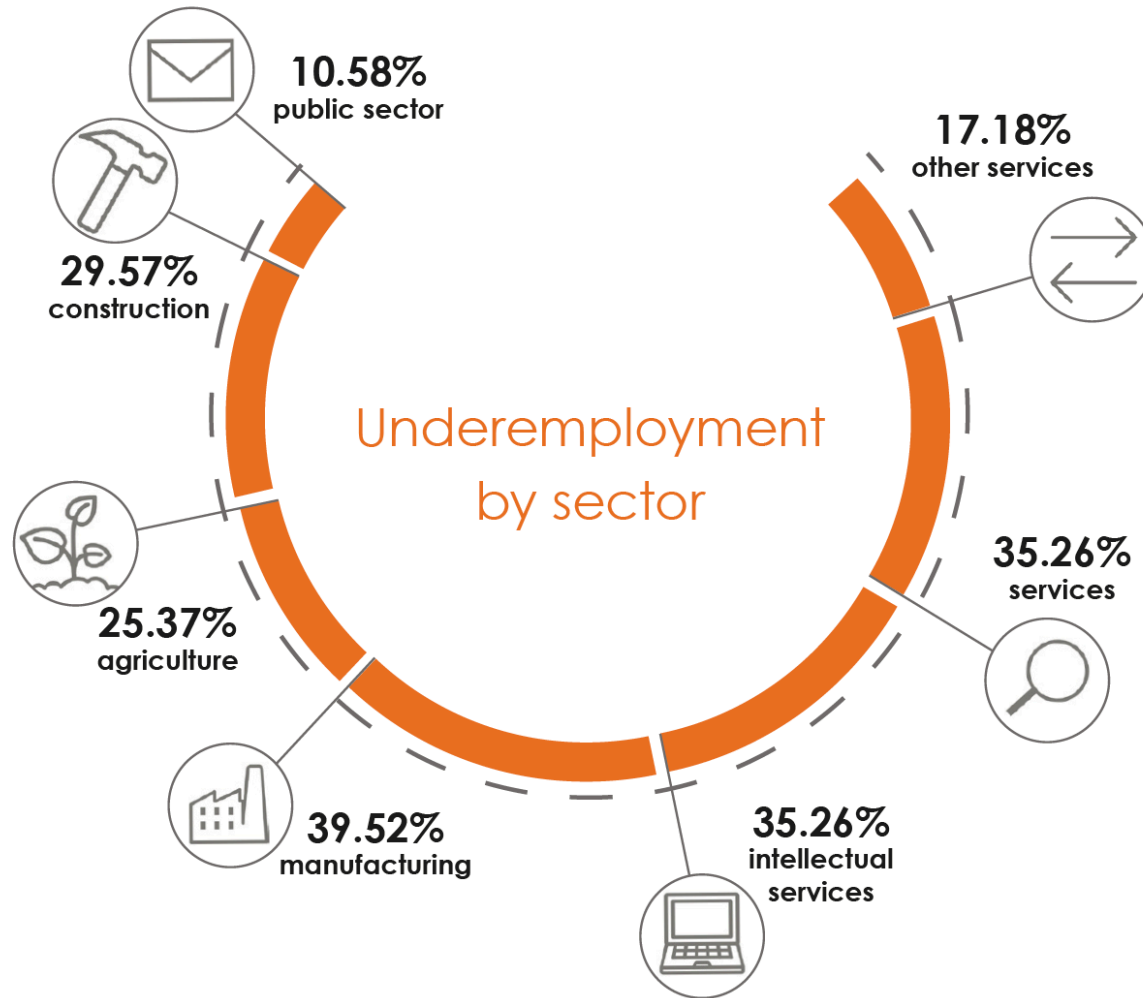
- Your objective
- Your target audience

PEP will assist – contents and visuals!

	Policy scenarios			
Effect on:	1. rural electricity subsidy (current REF policy)	2. 10% increase in productivity for household tasks	3. 10% increase in agricultural productivity	4. Combination of scenarios 1-3
Rural women's time spent on domestic work	≈ 1.0% reduction	≈ 0.8% reduction	≈ 0.14% increase	≈ 1.5% reduction
Rural women's employment	+0.65%	+0.51%	-0.10%	+1.01%
Rural women's income	+0.30%	+0.51%	+0.81%	+1.57%

Source: Authors' analysis

PEP Policy Brief



- A **graph/chart/infographic** to share your findings quickly



PEP Policy Brief

- **Recommendation**

- Identify best policy option, based on your findings
 - Clear & actionable

- **Road Map**

- Concrete & specific
- Steps to implement your recommendation
 - Committees that need to approve?
 - Laws need passing?
 - Which departments?

While writing, keep in mind:

- Your objective
- Your target audience



PEP Policy Brief

- **Scientific analysis summary**

- Research objectives/questions
 - Data source (primary/secondary data)
 - Key variables
 - Key methodology (Impact evaluation/field experiment)
 - Main research findings
-
- To show high quality of your evidence
 - THINK! Will your audience understand it?



PEP Policy Brief: Tips

Orwell's rules for writing

BE BRIEF:

- **Never use a long word where a short one will do.**
- **If possible to cut a word: CUT IT!**

BE STRAIGHTFORWARD:

- Avoid foreign phrases, scientific words, or jargon: find an **everyday** equivalent.
- **Use the active** (not the passive)
- Avoid metaphors or figures of speech.



PEP Policy Brief: Tips

WRITE FOR **SCANNERS**, NOT READERS

- **Think “skim read”** - use headings, bullets, etc.
- **Give and highlight actionable contents** - help them brief their own audience

USE **KEYWORDS**, NOT BIG WORDS:

- Plain language will benefit/attract any audience, regardless of background

ILLUSTRATE

- Examples to show what you mean



Session 3 – Strategizing your communications

1. Creating an effective dissemination package

- **Tools & Channels** - choosing the right ones for your audience
- **Adapt & Visualise** your message for your audience

2. Your PEP Policy Brief



References and further reading

- Communicating Research: A beginner's guide for researchers in Vietnam (ODI)
 - <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7183.pdf>
- Tools for Policy Impact: A handbook for researchers (ODI)
 - <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/194.pdf>
- The Knowledge Translation Toolkit (IDRC)
 - <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/46152/IDL-46152.pdf>
- A practical guide to communicating with non-scientists by Helen Pilcher
 - <https://sigchi.org/resources/communicating-your-research-with-the-public-and-press/>
- Communicating with Policymakers (FAO)
 - <http://www.fao.org/3/i2195e/i2195e02.pdf>
- *La recherche appliquée en économie - Méthodologie, communication scientifique et financement* (Research Methodology and Scientific Communication in Applied Economics) by Abdoulaye Seck
 - <http://www.editions-harmattan.fr/index.asp?navig=catalogue&obj=livre&no=61637>

