2023 PEP annual conference

Workshop:
Evidence-informed policy briefing

Session 1: Communicating evidence to policy

June 7
Marjorie Alain
PEP Director of Communication, Outreach and M&E

www.pep-net.org
Why are we here?

Communicating your findings in a way that is RELEVANT, APPEALING and USEFUL for policymakers
Why are we here?

Structure/contents of this workshop:

• **Session 1**: Communicating with policy and preparing your key messages

• **Session 2**: Adapting and visualizing your communications
  • Group task: prepare your key messages
Session 1 - Contents

- Communicating evidence to policy stakeholders
- Preparing / organizing your key messages
Understanding the needs of stakeholders

Understanding and aligning your messages with the needs of your audience = KEY to successful communication
Understanding the needs of stakeholders

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

Baruch Fischhoff, 2011

Applying the science of communication to the communication of science

“For policy makers to do science better, scientists need to do policy better.”

Chris Tyler, Director of UK Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology

The complicated relationship between science and policy
Understanding the needs of stakeholders
Constraints of policymakers

- An effective policy must be based on facts, but it is also influenced by cultural values and politics.

Political economy factors that prevent decision-makers from basing their decisions on scientific knowledge:

- Culture, ideology – acceptability
- Commitments, budget constraints – feasibility
- Crises/electoral cycles – priority issues/attention

To be effective, communication of research must be ADAPTED to take account of country-specific POLICY NEEDS & CONSTRAINTS
“What (policymakers) want from research is NOT: ‘It’s complicated’ or ‘Here’s the answer’. What they want is: comparative work highlighting a range of possible solutions.”

Brick et al., 2018

“Decision-makers need communications that succinctly describe potential harms and benefits of different options.”
Researchers must:

1. Understand the **POLICY PROBLEM** (vs research issue) in order to...

2. Position research/evidence into **existing policy options/strategies** in order to...

3. Produce practical/**useful recommendations** for policymakers
What do policymakers need to know? **Options**

When **communicate research findings** to policy users, must remember that:

**Decision = choice = options**

Decision-makers need to compare options!!

A policy decision will be made by **weighing the pros & cons**, or harms & benefits of the different options.
1. Understand the **POLICY PROBLEM** (vs research issue)

**POLICY QUESTION**

Answer provides recommendation FOR ACTION

**RESEARCH QUESTION**

Answer provides an assessment of the situation
1. Understand the **POLICY PROBLEM** (vs research issue)

**What are the effects of non-farm diversification on rural women’s income?**

Research or policy?
Understanding policy needs

1. Understand the **POLICY PROBLEM** (vs research issue)

   What type of intervention can effectively contribute to improving rural women’s income?

   Research or policy?

   **DECISION = CHOICE = OPTIONS**

   **POLICY DECISION = ALLOCATION OF LIMITED RESOURCES**
What do policymakers need to know?

Questions that decision-makers always have
Gluckman, 2019

• Why do we have to **DO** something now? Why is it a **priority**?
  ➢ What is the risk of doing or not doing something?

• Have we got the **OPTION** that meets our **broader needs**?
  ➢ How can your findings help identify the best option for intervention?
  ➢ How does it address their needs/priorities and fit with their “constraints”?

• What will it **cost**? (vs “benefits”)

(Answer to the question: **Why do we have to do something now? Why is it a priority?**)

(Answer to the question: **Have we got the option that meets our broader needs?**)

(Answer to the question: **What will it cost?** (vs “benefits”))
Policy stakeholders

MAIN STAKEHOLDERS

For your PEP project, we recommend to focus on:

- State
- Political Parties
- Think tanks
- Civil society
- IOs & NGOs
- Research Community
- Business Community
- The People
- Media
Engaging stakeholders – entry points

Entry points are:

- **People:** Existing or accessible contacts who can provide introductions or create opportunities to connect with target stakeholders.

- **Windows of opportunity** to catch the attention of policymakers, stakeholders, or the broader public.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government processes</th>
<th>E.g. revisions of existing legislation, budgets, or major policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes in administration</td>
<td>New national, sub-national, or local governments might dismiss or welcome new information (compared to their predecessors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political events</td>
<td>Regional meetings, global summits, elections, launch events for new policies or programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social events</td>
<td>E.g. events related to an advocacy issue (<em>international days, VIP visits..</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences and workshops</td>
<td>E.g. PEP national policy conference</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Engaging stakeholders – entry points

How to take advantage of an entry point:

**Anticipate:** Be prepared to discuss your research at seminars, conferences & public debates.
  - Most importantly: **HAVE A PITCH READY** in case of an unexpected entry point!

**Disseminate:** Raise awareness by disseminating information - make sure the information is available online ([link to share](#))

**Make allies:** Foster relationships with influential leaders, advisors, NGOs, or journalists that can advocate for your work
Engaging stakeholders

Be proactive!
Do NOT expect policy-makers to find/read your research.

➢ Must reach out and engage them → **raise their interest**

Be prepared!
Before you meet, be sure to do your homework:

➢ What are their interests/concerns/debates?
➢ What information do they need? Or can they provide?
➢ Prepare your “pitch” accordingly
Engaging stakeholders

**CONTEXT MATTERS!**

*Interest in issues that are important “NOW”*

- Media – public perceptions
- Commitments – electoral cycle
- Especially related to constituencies/core supporters
## Policy stakeholders – communication tips

| **STATE** | Focus on mandate/responsibilities  
Caution: Individual’s degree of expertise, or "technical knowledge", can vary. They may also have "preferred" sources of expertise/data |
| **POLITICIAN** | Focus on their “political capital”  
Caution: Be mindful of their “ideologies”/political messages and interest groups |
| **CIVIL SOCIETY** | Focus on their advocacy agenda/objectives  
Caution: Consider (inquire about) group’s relative influence, and legitimacy of representatives. |
| **MEDIA** | Focus on the interests of their “audience”  
Provide “ready-to-use” materials |
| **IOs / NGOs** | Focus on their thematic priorities (IOs) / advocacy agenda (NGOs)  
Inquire about or refer to their own research / literature |
Preparing your key messages
Preparing your key messages

Think about your objectives

1. Why do you want to share your research?
   - Inform the formulation of new policy
   - Modify existing programme/policy

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

The answers should help you:
   - Prioritize the message that is most relevant
Preparing your key messages

A good key policy message is:

1. **Simple**
   - Straight-forward messages are more memorable

2. **Attractive**
   - i.e., interesting to your target audience

3. **Concrete**
   - i.e., indicates specific action

[Bonus] 4. **Shareable**
   - A really good message will be easy for your target audience to share
Preparing your key messages

A good key policy message is simple

- 1 idea per sentence
- Plain language
Preparing your key messages

A good key policy message is **attractive**

It should **offer a solution** to a problem that is:

- Important to your audience
- Current or (even better) urgent
Preparing your key messages

A good key policy message is concrete

• Focus on the solution, and lay it out clearly
• Be specific, action-oriented (vs descriptive)
• Be realistic
Preparing your key messages

Does this work?

Is it...

1. Simple
2. Attractive
3. Concrete

Implementing policies that increase rural women’s household and farm productivity alongside the Rural Electrification Fund capital subsidies for mini-grid developers can increase women’s income and household well-being.

Vote: 👍 = yes | 😯 = no
Preparing your key messages

Does this work?

Is it…

1. Simple
2. Attractive
3. Concrete

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

Vote: 👍 = yes | 😞 = no
Preparing your key messages

Does this work?

Is it...

1. Simple
2. Attractive
3. Concrete

Land reform to increase women’s access
to agricultural land can improve food
security in Nigeria

Vote: 👍 = yes  |  😯 = no
Organizing your key messages – pyramid principle

The Pyramid Principle: benchmark model of “persuasive communications”

- Start with the point(s) you most want remembered
- Make your argument
- Provide evidence

The answer

Supporting arguments

Supporting data / facts

CONCLUSIONS from your analysis

Importance of problem + Action audience should take

Your findings + relevant evidence
The Pyramid Principle is a valuable tool for making persuasive arguments. It involves:

- **Lead** with your answer
- **Support** your answer with high-level insights
- **Back up** your insights with data, analysis, and evidence

The main point you want your audience to take away should be at the top, supported by insights, and backed up by supporting details.
You are trying to “sell” your policy messages as solutions to current development problems.

You can use the AIDA rule of marketing and advertising:

- **Attention**
- **Interest**
- **Desire**
- **Action**
Organizing your key messages – AIDA rule

- **Attention**
- **Interest**
- **Desire**
- **Action**

• Think about the story you are trying to tell and how this can lead to action *(your objectives)*

• **Use your knowledge of your audience** and your experience of the policy context
Minimum wage policy means more domestic workers move to the informal sector.

New findings show that compliance measures, such as inspections and awareness campaigns, can offset these effects.

- Minimum wage policies need to include provisions for working conditions inspections and awareness campaigns.
Organizing your key messages – AIDA rule

Focus on solution only – problem is “implicit”

Attention
- Increasing women’s access to agricultural land can improve food security in Nigeria (solution)

Interest
- New findings show that when women have access to more land it promotes effective, equitable and efficient agricultural development. (solution)

Desire

Action
- Land reform is vital to provide this essential access. (solution)
A. Enforcing the 2016 Land Act in communities will boost women’s decision-making power.

B. Incorporating women-focused measures into the policy can help increase gender equality and ensure the success of this policy.

C. If Malawi’s women continue to be disempowered, food insecurity and poverty will persist.

D. New findings show the Farm Input Subsidy improved agricultural productivity but reduced women’s empowerment.

- Attention
- Interest
- Desire
- Action

Organizing your key messages – AIDA rule
C. If Malawi’s women continue to be disempowered, food insecurity and poverty will persist

D. New findings show the Farm Input Subsidy improved agricultural productivity but reduced women’s empowerment

B. Incorporating women-focused measures into the policy can help increase gender equality and ensure the success of this policy.

A. Enforcing the 2016 Land Act in communities will boost women’s decision-making power
Organizing your key messages – AIDA rule

**Attention** | **Interest** | **Desire** | **Action**

- Use when you want to inspire **action**
- Suitable for formal tools
- & informal tools

- PEP policy brief
- National Policy Conference presentation
- “Elevator” pitch
- Social media post
Key messages: 
= 3-4 sentences
Use AIDA rule!
20 min
• Adapting your message to different audiences
• Visualising your communications

20 min
Hands on exercise in teams: ➢ Prepare your key messages (AIDA + audience-targeted)

20 min
Present your hands-on/key messages
2023 PEP annual conference

Workshop:
Evidence-informed policy briefing

Session 2: More tips for effective communication

June 8, 2023
Marjorie Alain
PEP Director of Communication, Outreach and M&E

www.pep-net.org
Session 3 - Contents

- Preparing your “pitch”
- Adapting your message for your audience
- Visualizing your contents
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
Methods to “structure” your message

Different methods/structure possible:

- **The pyramid principle:**
  1. Key Message: The Answer
  2. Supporting Arguments
  3. Supporting Data or Facts

- **The AIDA rule:**
  1. Attention
  2. Interest
  3. Desire
  4. Action
Preparing your “pitch”

An “elevator pitch” describes your proposal/message in a nutshell.

Can be delivered as a:

- **Speech** (ideally in 60 seconds or less),
- **Presentation**, (e.g. slides) or
- **Document** (one-page overview).

**Pitch = TEASER**

The full information comes later - e.g. by sharing your policy brief.

**Examples of “pitch tools”:**
- Press release
- Conference invitation
- Social media posts
- Video..
Preparing your “pitch”

Different methods/structure possible:

The **business** pitch – 6 components:

1) **Problem:** Identify a problem that is worth solving
2) **Solution:** The solution you propose
3) **Market (target):** Who will benefit from this solution, and “how”
4) **Competition:** Alternative solutions/options *(why is yours better)*
5) **Cost:** What will your solution cost *(if possible, compare)*
6) **Implementation:** Key milestones (+ timeline) for implementation of your solution
Preparing your “pitch”

**Recommendations for a successful pitch:**

**KEEP IT SHORT!!!!** Focus on the essentials – what do they NEED to know

**Make it simple:** Don’t use any terms, or references, that your audience may not understand

**Give numbers:** that your audience can relate to (population, cost, etc.)

**VISUALIZE:** Give them (simple) images that will stick to their mind..
More tips for effective communication

WRITE FOR SCANNERS, NOT READERS

- Think “skim read” - use headings, bullets, etc. help them “spot” the key info
- 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
- Tell a real-life story – Give the problem a “human face” (“people respond to people”)
Adapting your message

Think about 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry of Women</th>
<th>Ministry of Agriculture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Know:</strong> decision-making power is vital to empowerment</td>
<td><strong>Know:</strong> higher agricultural productivity means higher rural income and better food security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Know:</strong> empowered women = good for household productivity &amp; well-being</td>
<td><strong>Interest:</strong> boosting agricultural productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest:</strong> promoting women’s empowerment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Women</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcing the 2016 Land Act within communities will empower more women to make decisions over inputs and harvests.</td>
<td>Enforcing the 2016 Land Act within communities will increase agricultural productivity and improve food security.</td>
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Adapting your message: Visually

Visualizing your message
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
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.
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

In any written document...
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
In a slide presentation
Same rules apply…

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 a slide presentation
But also, and most importantly...

NEVER MORE THAN 1 LINE per idea/point (max 2)

No need for full sentences either..
Keywords only (slides = visual backup)
• 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/elder 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 formally do not have social security coverage (considered "informal workers"), this figure rises to 46% for women in the domestic sector.
Domestic sector in Uruguay:

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Low social security coverage:

• Only 54% for female domestic workers
• Vs 80% for (all sectors) workers in Uruguay
Visualizing contents – data visualization

Improve your graphs/figures

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

- Regression tables ARE NOT SELF-EXPLANATORY

- Not ALL data is necessary to understand
  - Remove data that does not contribute to supporting argument

- AVOID CLUTTERING
  - The lesser the better
  - DATA-INK ratio: more color/details is not necessarily better (confuse the brain)
Visualizing contents – data visualization
Visualizing contents – data visualization

[Bar chart showing sales and sales goals for each month from January to December.]

[Line chart showing trends in sales and sales goals from December to December.]
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 (%)

Uruguay

World

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

Qualitative

need to invest in improving long-term health outcomes

in-utero care

environmental conditions

Quantitative

Policies to reduce existing constraints facing entrepreneurs

Skills in sectors

Improved skills-sector matching would help increase returns to skills

National Institute of Statistics, NIS
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
Hands-on - Team work, 20 min

Time to practice!
Hands-on - Team work, 20 min

Your PEP Policy Brief

Key messages:
= 3-4 sentences
Use AIDA rule!

Policy Brief
No: 566, February 2023

Comment réduire la vulnérabilité des femmes Burkinabé dans le secteur agricole face aux aléas climatiques?

Par Fodina KONDA, Wormaldi alle Minida SOUPAITE, Ernest OUEDRAOGO, Gastou GOUFOUL, Clémence Berthimine NANEMA et Dialako OUEDRAOGO.

À propos du secteur agricole au Burkina Faso

L’agriculture burkinabé est un secteur économique... essentiel.
- Contribue 0,25% du PIB
- Occupe 90% des actifs
- Génère 6,5% des revenus
- Contribue à la principale source d’alimentation de la population.

fragile :
- Nature traditionnelle des activités
- Petites exploitations familiales (moins de 5 ha)
- États de recul (moins de 10% de potentiels exos aux aléas climatiques)
- 97% de l’agriculture est pluviométrique donc dépendante fortement déterminée par les conditions météorologiques
- Irrégularité des pluies entraîne une instabilité des rendements avec de fortes incidences sur les revenus
- Épisodes de sécheresse ponctuelle entraînant de faibles rendements surtout au niveau de la faune et des plantes
- Les inégalités de genre sont importantes
- Difficultés d’accès des femmes à la propriété foncière mais de 8% des propriétés tenues
- Part de l’élimination de 6,7% à 9,7% pour les femmes
- Valeurs et normes traditionnelles gênant l’éveil des femmes

- Conditions difficiles liées aux activités de production
- Les femmes sont davantage sollicitées pour les travaux domestiques (2,8 tour pour contre 0,2h pour les hommes), les activités agricoles

Les inégalités de genre inhérentes au secteur agricole contribuent ainsi à exposer davantage les femmes aux conséquences des aléas climatiques sur la performance du secteur.

Cette vulnérabilité est atténuée au cours des prochaines décennies. En effet, les scénarios du GI2 estiment que la température moyenne dans le pays pourrait augmenter de 1,8°C à 4,2°C d’ici 2050, par rapport aux niveaux préindustriels. Ainsi, les périodes sèches et humides devraient devenir plus extrêmes, menant à provoquer des déséquilibres importants dans le secteur agricole et les ressources en eau, qui sont particulièrement vulnérables face aux changements climatiques.
Hands-on - Team work, 20 min

Access your team’s slides – link in Zoom chat

- Slide 1:
  - Who’s your target audience?
  - What do they want/need to know?
  - What do you want to convince them to do?

- Slides 2:
  - Prepare your key messages for this target audience
  - 1 SLIDE, 3-4 sentences (bullet points, but FULL SENTENCES)
  - No visual support needed
Thank you!