

Day 5

Module 5

APPLYING EVIDENCE

OVERVIEW

🎯 **MODULE OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this module participants will:

- Identify indicators of evidence use
- Know steps for developing a communication strategy
- Describe objective, outcome, and audience for a communications strategy for their policy issue
- Draft a communications strategy for their policy issue including messages, channels, and evaluation

🕒 **TIME**

3 hours 25 min

ACTIVITIES

Recap

- A. Evidence application: What does it look like? Group brainstorm and discussion [30 min]
- B. Developing a communications strategy – Interactive presentation [45 min]
 - Practical Application Exercise 8: Participants develop key components of their communications strategy [45 min]
 - Practical Application Exercise 9: Participants complete communication strategy; share and receive feedback [45 min]
- C. Module reflection and evaluation [15 min]

📎 **MATERIALS**

- Module 5 PowerPoint
- Communications Strategy Worksheet

Module 5

ACTIVITY A: APPLICATION - WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

🎯 ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

At the end of the activity, participants will:

- Identify indicators of evidence use

🕒 TIME

30 min

📋 ACTIVITIES

Evidence application: What does it look like? Group brainstorm & interactive presentation [30 min]

✂️ MATERIALS

Module 5 PowerPoint

📖 STEPS

Begin by providing an overview of the Applying Evidence Module. This module will cover:

1. Indicators of evidence use (introduced Day 1)
2. Developing communication strategies

Evidence application: What does it look like? [30 min] [Slides ##]

1. In large group, ask participants to name ways in which we might see evidence used. Prompt them to consider thinking of application of evidence in a few broad categories, such as: reach, use, capacity building, and collaboration if that is helpful.
Note to facilitator: Get a sense of the group and decide if better to break into 2 groups - or if facilitator should lead the group.
2. If time allows, ask for real-life examples where participants have worked, worked most frequently, most easily, most successfully, or even least effectively/most difficult.
3. Record the responses on chart paper.
4. Compare and contrast the responses recorded on the chart paper with the three (3) “what does evidence application look like?”

slides:

What does evidence application look like?

- New policies or amended policies
- Recommendations adopted by implementing (and other) institutions.
- Guidelines revised to reflect the evidence
- Influencing the upstream policy dialogue
- Inclusion on agenda of technical working groups or other key meetings
- Changes in level of funding
- Changes made to program or services
- Scaling of the original program within geographic area

What does evidence application look like?

Use

- Examples of evidence used in:
 - Policy or guidelines
 - Program planning and management
 - Service delivery
 - Training (including teaching, counselling, health education, community outreach)
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Reach

- Number of scientific papers, reports, and other documents published
- Examples of information products and tools reprinted, reused, or redistributed by recipient
- Examples of information products and tools being adapted or translated by recipient
- Examples of leadership at global or regional technical meetings

What does evidence application look like?

Capacity Building

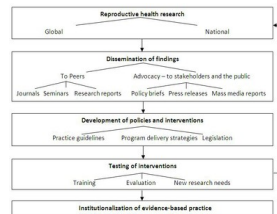
- Number and type of training sessions or capacity building workshops, with number of people per session
- Number and type of informal or applied capacity building efforts conducted
- Examples of diffusion of knowledge or second tier capacity building
- Examples of data being used in program decision-making

Collaboration

- Examples and amounts of funds leveraged as a result of project-related efforts
- Examples and scope of partner-to-partner collaboration

- Adapted from FHI360 Research Utilization

5. Point out that sometimes evidence is directly applicable (we see policy guidance developed around it). It can also be applied, but not so obvious (evidence seen in collaboration activities or funds leveraged). Since there are multiple ways that evidence can be applied in the real world, there are also multiple ways to indicate that use has in fact occurred
6. Reiterate the complexity of measuring use of evidence. It is a good reminder to articulate SMART indicators, but remain flexible. Even experts in developing and monitoring indicators allow for the fact that different people categorize measures differently and the important thing is to develop something that works for your context and can be agreed upon by stakeholders close to the work.
7. Point out that when we build our communications strategy or simply consider how to use evidence in the real world, such indicators provide us with a description of our end goal - a measure for knowing we successfully executed “application” of evidence.
8. Use the slide to illustrate the many points along the continuum where evidence can be and is applied, with the goal of institutionalizing an evidence-based practice. This is from the reproductive health field but somewhat generalizable to other sectors.



Source: Measure Evaluation PRH (no date). *Family Planning and Reproductive Health Indicators Database*. http://www.cpc.unc.edu/measure/prh/rh_indicators

9. Check for questions, comments or learnings from the brainstorm.
10. Set up for next slide: developing a communication strategy.

Module 5

ACTIVITY B: DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

At the end of the activity participants will:

- Know steps for developing a communication strategy
- Describe objective, outcome, and audience for a communications strategy for their policy issue
- Draft a communications strategy for their policy issue including messages, channels, and evaluation

TIME

2 hours 15 minutes

ACTIVITIES

- A. Developing a communications strategy – presentation & facilitated discussions [45 min]
- B. Practical Application Exercise 8: Participants develop their communication objective and analyse their audience [45 min]
- C. Practical Application Exercise 9: Participants develop the other components of their communications strategy [45]

MATERIALS

PowerPoint

STEPS

- A. Developing a communications strategy – presentation & facilitated discussions [45 min]**
 1. Review activity objectives.
 2. Introduce the communications strategy sub-session by asking the group to share aloud the purpose of a communication strategy - why are they needed?
 3. Ask if any of the participants have developed a communications strategy before, request him/her to talk about the key steps he/she undertook in developing a communications strategy.

4. Point out that having a clear strategy on how to communicate evidence to a targeted policymaker is critical in enabling uptake.
5. Use “Steps in developing a communications strategy” slide to describe the various steps in developing an effective communications strategy. Cover the following steps and explain that we will go into more detail on some of them:
 1. Define your communication objectives
 2. Identify and analyse your audiences and their contexts (including the potential opposition)
 3. Develop the messages to convey to your audiences (elevator pitch)
 4. Select the channels to use (e.g. publications, media, social media, events, human contacts)
 5. Create a communication work-plan
 6. Implement your communications activities
 7. Monitor and evaluate your communication objectives and activities

Step 1: Define your communication objectives

1. Ask yourself what do you want to achieve with your communications activities?
 - a. Define this in simple, clear and measurable terms.
 - b. Your communication objectives will be informed by the issue you are seeking to address.

For instance, if the issue you are seeking to address is not on the policy agenda, then your communication objectives will focus on setting the agenda for the issue, and this will largely involve increasing awareness and understanding of the issue and its implications for development.

On the other hand, if the issue you are seeking to address is already on the agenda, then you will need to understand why the issue is not receiving the requisite attention. Your communication objective for such an issue will seek to shift thinking on the issue by clarifying misunderstandings or confusion surrounding the issue, or tackling the opposition to the issue.

Step 2: Understand your target audience

1. Conduct a group brainstorm to identify who are policymakers/influencers?
 - a. Participants may suggest: MPs, ministers.

- b. Try to push them to think of all the other people who work in policy making institutions. For example in parliaments there are also researchers, librarians, clerks etc. The list should include a wide range of actors.
2. Point out that an important first step in analysing your audience is categorizing them so that you are clear on:
 - a. *Your Primary Audience* – The policymaker who can directly affect policy on your issue
 - b. *Your Secondary Audience* – Policymakers and other actors who can influence the primary audience (allies)
Examples: Opinion leaders and include reporters and media executives, heads of professional associations, community leaders, and women's groups. Informal: advisor, spouse, secretary
 - c. *Your "Opponents"* – Policymakers and other actors opposed to your policy reform suggestions.
3. Note that once audiences are identified, it's also useful to identify individuals who are in positions to serve as "policy champions" - respected, spokespersons for your cause.
4. Point out that research has shown that communications can be more effective when directed at various audiences at the same time - so the likelihood of impacts is increased to the extent that different groups are all talking about the same issues.
 - a. Develop a database of opinion leaders and provide them with an on-going stream of materials - fact sheets and poll data - to keep them informed and engaged in your issues.
5. Show the "Know your target audience" slide. Explain that this step in analyzing your audiences is to find out:
 - a. What do they know about your topic?
 - b. Are they interested in your topic?
 - c. Who do they listen to?
 - d. What are their information needs about your topic?
 - e. What are their current sources of information?
 - f. What are the best ways to reach them? (formats & channels)
6. Explain that a good understanding of your audience will inform the next steps of your communication, i.e. developing compelling messages for each of the different audiences and choosing effective formats and channels for reaching these audiences.

7. Point out that if you don't have the answers to these questions - one way to find out is through audience research

Practical Application Exercise 8: Develop your communication objectives and analyse your audiences [45 min]

[30 minutes for worksheet and 15 minutes for the facilitators to provide individual feedback]

1. Explain that participants should use their communications strategy worksheets found in their folders to take 30 minutes to:
 - a. Write down at least 1 communication objective and expected outcome(s)
 - b. Identify and analyze the primary audience for your policy brief
2. Take 15 minutes to provide individual feedback to participant's responses

Step 3: Developing Messages

1. Note that we have already covered a lot of important elements in developing compelling messages when we covered the development of actionable recommendations, policy briefs and elevator pitch.
2. Use slide and offer a final statement on this topic by sharing the four tips for developing effective messages (use the “developing messages” slide):

Four Tips for developing the messages:

- 1) Keep the number of key messages for each group to a maximum of **2-3 messages**, and deliver those same messages consistently to that group. You can certainly use different spokespersons - but everybody should be reading from the same script.
- 2) Tailor the message to fit the audience - it's the audience that should drive message content. The policymaker is likely to be most interested in one aspect of what you have to present - **What's in it for me?**
- 3) Make sure the message is delivered by a source the audience finds credible - The **messenger is often as important or (sometimes) more important than the message** itself (i.e. ‘the medium is the message’ adage).
- 4) Keep the message at the level of the audience - **avoid technical jargon** - Using words or phrasing that conjure positive images - better to say ‘family planning’ or ‘child spacing’ than ‘population control’. Explain that effective policy messages often incorporate phrases that are in vogue in the popular culture or that are framed in terms of people's values or conjure positive images in people's minds about an issue.

2. Show the “Who should deliver your message?” slide. Explain that the person who delivers your message is as important as the message. Ask participants to think critically about who should deliver the message:
 - a. You
 - b. Your boss
 - c. A celebrity
 - d. A policymaker who is already on “your side”
 - e. A foreigner

Step 4: Communication Channels & Activities

1. Use slide on Communication Channels & Activities and cover the content:

Types of communication channels

 - a. Face-to-face (Interpersonal). Examples include:
 - Workshops, seminars (are there upcoming ‘focus-generating events’)
 - Reports or policy memoranda
 - Letters, email
 - b. Mass media. Examples include:
 - Press
 - Broadcast (Radio &TV)
 - Mass mailings
 - Internet websites
 - c. Social media. Examples include:
 - Twitter
 - Facebook
2. Show the “determine formats appropriate for audience” slide. Explain that ‘formats’ are the ways we present the key messages to audiences. There are dozens of different formats that can be used through the interpersonal and mass media communication channels. Cover the content on selecting formats that are the most appropriate for your audiences:
 - a. Print materials: fact sheets, wall charts, booklets, policy memoranda
 - b. Presentations: computer graphics, slides
 - c. TV & radio spots, news releases
 - d. Electronic channels (Internet)
3. Show the “Tips for conveying the message” slide. Explain that appearance is important. Pay careful attention to design, and stimulate the reader through appearance.

4. Point out other tips for clarity and brevity: Language should accommodate audience: avoid technical language, statistical terms, or mathematical formulas; avoid complicated graphics.

Explain that clarity and brevity are innovative! Particularly when it comes to presenting complex research findings in an accessible way. If there are tables and models that must be included, they can always be placed in an appendix.

Reiterate that policy audiences are very busy - so brevity counts!. A policy booklet or report should:

- a. Be no longer than 10 - 20 pages (a brief 2-4 pages)
 - b. Have an executive summary
 - c. Contain clearly labeled, simple charts
 - d. Contain recommendations for action
 - e. Keep focusing on the key messages - Some people only look at the overview page and the elements that stand on a page : bullets; (callouts), photo captions, boxes and graph titles so if you can get all your important information worked into those elements all the better.
5. Make the points about timeliness and timing: Messages should be linked to current events or issues; the dissemination process is ongoing -- it takes more than one shot for maximum impact. Information will be more relevant if it is attached to other issues that are of concern at the moment.
 6. Note that credibility and trustworthiness are important factors also.

Step 5: Create a Work Plan

1. Use slides and explain that the last practical step to complete the plan is to devise work plan. The actual nuts and bolts of the plan is often overlooked or given short shrift by planners.
2. Read or have a volunteer read the slide content: The key questions to ask yourself when creating a work plan:
 - a. For whom
 - b. When
 - c. By what means
 - d. By whom
 - e. How often
 - f. How many
3. Explain that a work plan should specify:
 - a. Communication activities and the timelines

- b. What resources are needed (human & financial)
 - c. Be alert to opportunities! Are there any upcoming 'focus-generating events' that will support your objective?
4. Explain that it is important to identify and include in the work plan focus-generating events such as:
- a. Global or national conferences
 - b. Legislation for laws/regulations
 - c. Annual budgeting process
 - d. Periodic program reviews/evaluations

Point out that incorporating quality time for brainstorming on upcoming events as part of your regular planning can help avoid those last minute rushes to produce materials or get on the agenda.

5. Show "Pretest!" slide and make the point that it is important to pre-test messages on communication products to:
- a. Dramatically improve the effectiveness of materials
 - b. Reduce cost & effort
- Explain that we rarely have the luxury of conducting extensive tests - but simple, low cost efforts can be equally as effective. The simplest strategy is just to select a few members of those nontechnical, policy audiences and ask them to comment on both format as well as the content - What are the key messages that they're receiving?

Step 6: Implement your Communications Activities

Step 7: Evaluation

1. Show the "Did you achieve your outcome?" slide and ask the question: *what is the evidence* that your issue has gained the attention of policymakers?
- Are senior policymakers talking about your issue, or starting initiatives to tackle your issue, e.g. setting up a task-force or TWG to draft a policy on your issue? Have your interventions enhanced coalition efforts to increase the saliency of your issue? Is there evidence of use of your information for policy learning?
- a. Performance - Were all the activities implemented, delivered, and on time?
 - b. Impact - Did activities bring about the desired change? Is there a new policy or program tackling your issue?
6. Wrap up the presentation by stating that well-designed communications activities will create demand for more information on the issue and/or trigger a change in policy or programme.

7. Recap the steps briefly since there are many!
 1. Define your communications objectives
 2. Identify and analyse your audiences
 3. Develop the messages to convey to audiences (e.g., elevator pitch)
 4. Select the channels to use
 5. Create a communication work-plan
 6. Implement your communications activities
 7. Monitor and evaluate your communication activities

Practical Application Exercise 9: Completing the remaining steps of your communications strategy worksheet – Activities and M&E indicators (45minutes (20 minutes to complete the worksheet, and 25 minutes to share the worksheet in groups and receive feedback)

Part 1:

1. Show slide with instructions.
2. Ask participants to get their communications strategy worksheets and complete two steps, which they will need as they move forward in sharing the evidence in their policy briefs:
 - a. Step 4: Identify channels of communication – Which channels will they use to engage their primary audiences with their messages in their policy briefs?
 - b. Step 7: Develop an M&E strategy to identify if objectives were met. Identify indicators that show the evidence that your issue has gained the attention of policymakers.

Part 2:

3. Introduce the group activity to share their steps in groups and receive feedback.
4. Divide the participants into 3-4 groups and designate a facilitator to lead each group.
5. Each member of the groups should share their two steps with their group.
6. The group should then provide feedback for each participant's 2 steps
7. Check for remaining questions, clarifications and close the activity

Module 5

MODULE REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

🕒 TIME

15 minutes

📋 ACTIVITIES

- A. Reflection Notebooks: Reflect and write take aways and/or outstanding questions in notebooks
- B. Complete module evaluation form

✂️ MATERIALS

- Notebooks, paper, or Participant Guides for reflection notes
- Module objectives slide
- Evaluation form

📖 STEPS

A. Reflection: Notebook

1. Explain that for this reflection activity, participants will take a few minutes to write down and track key points to remember, how their learning could be applied in their jobs, tasks or “to do’s” for later, and outstanding questions that need more attention.
2. Share that this activity can be 100% confidential if they choose – they do not need to share their notebooks or written reflections.
3. Have participants use blank pages in the Participants Guide, their own notebooks, or other blank pages to reflect and make notes on the module.
4. Explain that there is value in returning to one’s written notes at a later point in time or after the workshop. Points and notes written in their own language may come in handy for: making a debrief at their workplaces; reminding themselves of tasks or priorities they want to continue exploring; or communicating to the facilitators where they need more help.
5. If needed, writing prompts might include the following. Create a

slide for these or write on chart paper:

- What did you learn that you can use in your work place?
- What would you share in a debrief at your work place?
- Are there sub-topics from that module you want to explore more?
- What ideas did this module generate for you?
- Are there tasks or “to-do’s” you want to follow up on later?
- Are there topics or areas you want to clarify with the facilitator or group?

B. Module Evaluation

1. Ensure that the slide with the module objectives is shown or otherwise reviewed.
2. Hand out the evaluation forms and remind participants that their feedback is valued and will be used. The facilitators will review feedback daily. Their names on the forms are optional.