MODULE 1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module participants will:

- Define the terms & role of evidence in policy making
- Describe the importance & value of evidence informed policy making
- Identify barriers & facilitators of evidence informed decision-making
- Describe context & sources of information that influence policy making
- List steps involved in making policy
- Identify tactics for reaching policymakers in the right way & at the right time
- Know & demonstrate how to draft a policy question
BRAINSTORM

HOW DO YOU DEFINE...

- Data
- Evidence
- Policy
- Decision-making
- EIPM

DEFINITION

Data

- Factual information (as measurements or statistics) used as a basis for reasoning, discussion, or calculation

- Facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis.

  Synonyms: facts, figures, statistics, details, particulars, specifics

Source: Merriam Webster

Source: Google
DEFINITION

Evidence

The available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid.

Source: Oxford English Dictionary
TYPES OF INFORMATION/EVIDENCE USED IN POLICY-MAKING

- Systematic reviews (vs single studies)
- Evaluations
- Pilot studies
- Case studies
- Expert advice
- Information from practice & implementation
- Citizen reports
- Media
DEFINITION

**Policy**

A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual.

*Source: Oxford Dictionary*

**Decision-making**

The process of examining possibilities and options, comparing them, & choosing a course of action.

*Source: Wikipedia*
DEFINITION

EIPM:

- Approach that aims to ensure that decision-making is well-informed by the best available evidence. It is characterized by systematic and transparent access to, and appraisal of, evidence as an input into policy-making.

- Evidence-informed policy provides an effective mechanism to establish in a scientifically valid way, what works or does not work, and for whom it works or does not work.


“Best available” may not include rigorous scientific research or evaluation

The term evidence-based policy is used in the literature, yet largely related to only one type of evidence – research. Using the term “evidence-influenced or evidence-informed” reflects the need to be context sensitive and consider use of the best available evidence when dealing with everyday circumstances.

EIPM -- More on why “evidence-informed”

Evidence, in this definition, could be derived from research, citizens and stakeholders, and from practice and implementation.

Evidence informed policy is not based exclusively on research evidence or on one set of findings. This terminology allows for the reality that sometimes research findings are considered and rejected; but the resulting policy was still evidence-informed.
GROUP DISCUSSION

LOCAL EXAMPLES OF EIPM

1. In 3 groups identify & discuss your experiences & examples from work of evidence-informed decisions or policy-making [10 min]

2. Report back to full group [3 min each group]
EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICY MAKING

Why do we care?
Why do we want it?
How does it help us?
EVIDENCE IN POLICY MAKING HELPS...

- Make good investment decisions
- Increase efficiency in performance & service
- Strengthen programs & improve results
- Ensure accountability & reporting
- Improve quality of services provided
- Ascertain the acceptability of a policy to stakeholders
EVIDENCE IN POLICY MAKING HELPS… (CONTINUED)

- Explain need for certain decisions or impetus for actions
- Show reasons for choosing one of many competing arguments
- Increase confidence in decisions that are eventually made
- Help build consensus
- Raise additional resources
- Show effectiveness of policy & relationship between risks & benefits
WHAT IS EVIDENCE APPLICATION ANYWAY?

Where would you see evidence applied at work?

What does it look like?

It’s not just official policies...
EXAMPLES OF APPLIED EVIDENCE

- New or amended policies
- Recommendations adopted by implementers
- Guidelines, resources, job aids revised reflecting evidence
- Influencing upstream policy dialogue
- Inclusion on technical working group agenda or other key meetings
- Changes in level of funding
- Changes made to program or services
- Scale up of intervention or program
CONTEXT OF POLICY MAKING

This is the policy process

Source: CDC. (2012)
POLICY MAKING IS COMPLEX!

WHAT HAPPENS TO EVIDENCE IN THIS CONTEXT?

There are many factors

Source: Phil Davies Impact to Insight Meeting, ODI, 2005
EVIDENCE NEEDS AT THE 4 STAGES OF POLICY-MAKING

Refer to Handout #3
GROUP DISCUSSION

STEPS IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- How does it happen in your country or organization?
- Is there guidance for policy development?
- What steps are likely to be common among different countries or organizations?
1. Identify a policy issue
2. Preliminary considerations before starting development
3. Assemble a policy development team
4. Identify/analyze problems and issues to be addressed in new/revised policy
5. Conduct stakeholder analysis to be involved
6. Set goals and objectives of the envisioned policy
7. Identify policy options to achieve the goals and objectives
   Develop a comprehensive set of options. This requires research evidence, particularly evidence from systematic reviews, best practices, and local evidence on what works
The logic model is widely used for evaluating interventions and policies. It assists the user to explore the linkages from inputs → activities → outcomes → impacts.

8. Appraise & select policy options

Critically evaluate each policy option by comparing the relative merits associated with each possible policy option, including: costs, benefits, risks, and other relevant impacts.

Establish evaluation criteria:

- Effectiveness
- Acceptability
- Feasibility
- Capabilities & capacity
- Political will
- Sustainability
- Evaluability
9. Appraise & select policy options

Strive to answer the following questions when appraising policy options:

- Consistent with current government priorities, existing laws, regulations, and policies? With regional and international standards/policies and conventions?
- Require new or revised laws or regulations?
- Gender-sensitive? Does it cover vulnerable populations?
- Sensitive to human rights?
- Acceptable to key stakeholders, including political leadership, professional associations, beneficiaries, & implementers, among others?
9. Draft the policy
10. Deliberate draft policy with stakeholders
11. Validate & obtain official endorsement
12. Launch & implement policy
13. Monitor, evaluate, learn & revise policy as needed
“Laws are like sausages. You should never watch them being made.”

Otto von Bismarck
GROUP DISCUSSION

BARRIERS & FACILITATORS

Using the examples of policymaking processes in Handout 1 (adolescent reproductive health policy & Malaria treatment policy in Kenya) in your Participant’s Guide, discuss barriers & facilitators for using evidence in ‘the real world’

- What are examples from your work?
- What barriers prevent evidence use?
- What facilitates evidence use?
BARRIERS

- Lack of available research or evidence
- Lack of relevant research or evidence
- No time, opportunity, mandate to use evidence
- Insufficient skill in understanding strength of evidence/research methods
- Insufficient funds

FACILITATORS

- Access to research or evidence
- Improved dissemination of evidence
- Strong & relevant implementation findings
- Policy makers who believe other evidence must balance expert opinion
- Strong advocates for research
- Partnerships: policy maker & researcher
GROUP DISCUSSION

BARRIERS & FACILITATORS

- What distinctions are there between political and technical barriers and facilitators?

- With regard to facilitators, do any appear to be “low hanging fruit” or relatively easy/accessible solutions to evidence use in policy making?
POLICY WINDOWS AND REACHING POLICY MAKERS

The policy window is the point at which policy issues move onto the government agenda and toward decision and action.

--John Kingdon, Public Policy Analyst, University of Michigan

OK, and how do we get to that point?
TWO DOMAINS INVOLVED IN CREATING A POLICY WINDOW AND REACHING POLICY MAKERS

The Political System

The Human Element
DOMAIN 1: THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

- Bodies of government,
- Roles of parliament and civil service,
- How laws are made

Understand the structures and roles where you intend to have influence.

On your topic of interest:
- Any special policy processes?
- Relevant teams responsible
- Devolved to local bodies?
DOMAIN 2: THE HUMAN ELEMENT

Policy making is about people - and ideas, but mostly people.

- Policymakers have different ways they like to be contacted.
- Take time to know their background and preferences.

It is essential to cultivate relationships and opportunities.
“Policymakers believe that the most important contributions scholars [and experts] can make are ... as informal advisors or creators of new knowledge. However, severe time constraints limit their ability to use such scholarship in any but its' very briefest presentation.”


One systematic review of how evidence and information influence decision-makers found that the absence of personal contact between researchers and policymakers and the lack of timeliness or relevance of research were the most common constraints.

KINGDON’S POLICY WINDOW MODEL

The **problem stream** - is condition considered a problem?
- Problem defined, focus, call for change, attention from data/events

The **policy stream** - are there programs or solutions to implement?

The **political stream** - are politicians willing and able to make a policy change?
- Agenda formed. Government resolution to resolve. Bandwagon effect.

GROUP DISCUSSION

COMMENTS ON THE 3-STREAMS THEORY?

What’s your take on the model?
Where do you/evidence come in?

“There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.”

- Victor Hugo
DEFINING & DEVELOPING A POLICY QUESTION

What is a policy question?

Source: http://its.unl.edu/desktop/policies-governing-client-management-tool-use
A POLICY QUESTION IS...

- A question of what needs to be done to respond to a specific public issue. (You might also consider this a policy statement.)
- A question that generates information for addressing or responding to a specific public policy issue/concern.
- A way to clarify what evidence you need to search for.

- For example: How can we address the frequent cholera outbreaks in community X?
QUESTIONS IN HEALTH POLICY MAY FOCUS ON...

- A risk factor, disease or condition
- Programs, services or drugs currently being used to address a condition
- Current health system arrangements within which interventions are provided
- Current degree of implementation of an agreed upon course of action (e.g. a policy or guideline)

http://www.health-policy-systems.com/content/pdf/1478-4505-7-S1-S4.pdf
RESEARCH QUESTION
VERSUS POLICY QUESTION

What is the difference between them?
RESEARCH VS POLICY QUESTION

- Research question generates information for understanding/explaining a phenomenon
- A policy question generates information for addressing or responding to a specific public policy issue/concern
- Policy questions are often broader than research questions – a policy question often has more than one research question
- A policy question moves the research to the next level – what to do with the new research evidence? (the so what question?)
# EXAMPLES: RESEARCH & POLICY QUESTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Policy Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What factors explain the lack of progress in reducing maternal mortality in country Z?</td>
<td>In what ways can the maternal health program in country Z be improved to reduce maternal deaths?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is community X susceptible to frequent cholera outbreaks?</td>
<td>How can we address the frequent cholera outbreaks in community X?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the nexus between policy and practice when implementing community health strategy?</td>
<td>How effective is the implementation of the community health strategy/guidelines?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are communities and non-state actors contributing to TB control in Malawi?</td>
<td>How can we improve the involvement of communities and non-state actors in TB control?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identifying needs for research evidence

Clarify a problem

Frame options to address a problem
(and describe each option’s costs and consequences)

Option 1
- Benefits
- Harms
- Costs/cost-effectiveness

Option 2
- Benefits
- Harms
- Costs/cost-effectiveness

Option 3
- Benefits
- Harms
- Costs/cost-effectiveness

Implement an option

Is it just “research” evidence?

http://www.health-policy-systems.com/content/pdf/1478-4505-7-S1-S4.pdf.
STEPS FOR DEVELOPING A POLICY QUESTION

1. Identify policy issue. What specific concern does MoH/Parliament want to address?
   - Ineffective interventions/programs? Lack of existing policy for a neglected/emerging issue? Inadequate investments?

2. Frame a question that generates evidence for addressing the issue. Try starting your question with:
   - In what ways can X be improved to…
   - How can we address the…
   - How effective is the…

3. Expect an iterative process.
   - As you determine the different components relevant to your question and situation, the question may change.
   - The stage in policy process also a factor
Different types of evidence are needed at different stages in the policy process. The type can influence the question.
## Example Questions by Stage: Agenda Setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of the policy process</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Evidence issues</th>
<th>Example questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agenda setting</strong></td>
<td>Prioritizing an issue and raising awareness</td>
<td>• Have a comprehensive understanding of the specific situation before proceeding with formulation&lt;br&gt;• Key considerations include:&lt;br&gt;  o links between activities and outcomes&lt;br&gt;  o projected intervention cost&lt;br&gt;  o projected intervention impact&lt;br&gt;  o quantity of evidence&lt;br&gt;  o credibility of evidence</td>
<td>▪ What are priorities for new strategic plan?&lt;br&gt;▪ What is magnitude of problem?&lt;br&gt;▪ Which focus areas or populations for new policies?&lt;br&gt;▪ Which geographic areas of highest need?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(adapted from Sutcliff. S, ODI, 2005)
## EXAMPLE QUESTIONS BY STAGE: FORMULATION

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Example questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formulation</td>
<td>1) Determining the policy options 2) Selecting the preferred option*</td>
<td>• Use evidence to identify new problems or the magnitude of a problem</td>
<td>▪ Which services would make the greatest impact?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Emphasize the importance of a problem to relevant policy actors using evidence</td>
<td>▪ Details of options? Options comprehensive? Cost?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure the evidence is 1) credible, and 2) effectively communicated</td>
<td>▪ What are options/interventions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Which options are best?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(adapted from Sutcliff, S, ODI, 2005)
### Example Questions by Stage: Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of the policy process</th>
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<th>Example questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Implementation              | Practical activity actualization | • Improve implementation effectiveness through operational evidence  
• Ensure the evidence is relevant to practical application in various contexts. Examples include:  
  o analytic work  
  o systematic learning around technical skills  
  o expert knowledge  
  o practical skills  
  o action research  
  o pilot projects | ▪ What’s the practical experience?  
▪ How to improve initiative? Operations?  
▪ What are the information needs for specific context or campaigns? |

(adapted from Sutcliff, S, ODI, 2005)
# Example Questions by Stage: Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Example questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Evaluation**              | Monitoring and assessing the process and impact of an intervention | • Develop monitoring mechanisms first  
• Implement a comprehensive evaluation procedure to determine the implemented policy’s effectiveness  
• Use M&E to ensure objective, thorough, and relevant evidence  
• Communicate M&E results to effectively inform the continuing policy process | ▪ Which strategies increase impact of specific services? Is program meeting its process objectives? – e.g., training the stated number of providers  
▪ How to increase coverage of program? What learnings to apply?  
▪ Is policy effective? |

(adapted from Sutcliff, S, ODI, 2005)
Bonus question: If you are in policy formulation stage – looking for options -- what is a useful type of evidence document that can help you get facts about multiple options and best options all in one place?
SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS!

...because they help to:

• assess and rank interventions on the basis of effectiveness and cost-effectiveness

• show where interventions have been applied

• provide the relative cost of interventions

• indicate the strength of evidence on an agreed scale
Session 2 Foundation: Developing a Policy Question

Background

The integration of family planning (FP) and HIV services improves sexual and reproductive health outcomes by providing both services under one programmatic umbrella. This type of integration refers to the delivery of health services, and it is a subset of closely related but broader linkages between family planning and HIV policies, funding, programs, and advocacy.

For close to a decade, governments, normative bodies, funders, implementing partners, and communities have issued statements supporting the integration of family planning and HIV policies, programs, and services. As a result, meeting the contraceptive and other reproductive health needs of people living with HIV through the provision of integrated services is a core component of key global health frameworks. Major HIV/AIDS funders such as PEPFAR and The Global Fund increasingly encourage the integration of family planning into programs they support. For example, recent PEPFAR guidance states that “The need for family planning for HIV-positive women who desire to space or limit births is an important component of the preventive care package of services for people living with HIV/AIDS and for women accessing PMTCT services…PEPFAR is a strong supporter of linkages between HIV/AIDS and voluntary family planning and [other] reproductive health programs” (PEPFAR Fiscal Year Country Operational Plan (COP) Guidance). At the country level, some government health leaders have established national coordination efforts between reproductive health and family planning departments and HIV departments, which, in turn, have led to measurable progress in policy and practice. At least 16 countries have implemented the Rapid Assessment Tool for Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV Linkages to assess the current state of integration and develop action plans for strengthening efforts.
Instructions:

✓ Read the selected paragraphs

2. Imagine this scenario: Given the developments described in reading, your superior has asked you to advance FP and HIV integration in your country.

3. What policy question can be derived from this directive?

4. Discuss as a group
CASE STUDY – POLICY QUESTION

Potential answers:

What actions in my country will be the most effective for successfully integrating FP and HIV policies, programs, and services?

Or

What does the evidence base indicate are the best policies and practices to achieve success?
PRACTICAL APPLICATION
EXERCISE 1

Part 1: Refine your policy question [15 min]

Part 2: Share your policy question with the group and receive feedback [45 min]

Remember: your policy question needs to be answerable with existing research and reports
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At the end of this session participants will:

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- Know and demonstrate how to draft a policy question
MODULE 1 REFLECTION & EVALUATION

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