

DSA Conference 2004: Promoting Evidence-based Development Policy

Better utilisation of research and evidence in development policy and practice can help save lives, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life. All too often, however, it seems that researchers, civil society actors and policymakers live in parallel universes, and relations between them are strained. A better understanding of how research can contribute to pro-poor policies, and systems to put it into practice, are urgently needed.

Speakers in this session will provide:

- a summary of current knowledge about the role of research in development policy,
- an analytical and practical framework to improve its impact,
- the latest on effective research communication,
- development research policy perspectives from DFID, and
- the perspective of a southern (action)research practitioner.

Discussion will focus on:

- Gathering experience from participants – what works, what doesn't work and why?
- What should we do to improve the impact of our work on development outcomes:
 - Who should we be targeting?
 - How should we be working?
 - How can we work more effectively with southern researchers?

The workshop will be chaired by **Diane Stone**, Marie-Curie Chair, Head of Public Policy at the Central European University in Budapest.

The **speakers** will be:

- **John Young**, who leads the Research and Policy in Development Programme in ODI. He will speak about:
 - the theory around the role of research in policy processes,
 - a framework to help understand policy processes and develop strategies to promote evidence-based policy making
- **Dominic Furlong**, has worked on development research communication and reporting services at IDS for six years, undertaken knowledge management consultancies for DFID, and is about to take-up a communications role with the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) in Geneva. He will speak about:
 - the theory and practice of getting research results out and used;
 - bottlenecks to learning, dissemination and uptake in the north and south;
 - opportunities to improve research communication.
- **Dylan Winder**, who works with DFID's Central Research Department, with policy teams working on livelihoods and information and communication, and as part of a Whitehall-wide team looking at the role of science in policy. He will talk about:
 - the emphasis on communication and engagement in the new CRD research strategy,
 - the impact of current policies on national research capacity and science-policy links,
 - the role of northern donors and researchers.
- **Naved Chowdhury**, who has worked on action-research, capacity-building and policy advocacy programmes in Bangladesh for the last 7 years. He will talk about:
 - the current and future impact of northern-funded and led development research,
 - the capacity of southern researchers and their engagement with policy makers,
 - what should be done to improve the use of research in policy.



Recent Publications include:

Tools for Policy Impact: A Handbook for Researchers, Daniel Start and Ingie Hovland, October 2004

The Overseas Development Institute, as part of its Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) programme, has been looking at the links between research and policy for several years. It is now beginning a process of identifying, developing, distributing and delivering tools, resources and training support that can help researchers access policy processes, with the aim of using their research to contribute to more evidence-based and pro-poor policy. This handbook presents work-in-progress on tools for policy impact, specifically geared towards the needs of researchers. The tools are grouped under the headings Research Tools, Context Assessment Tools, Communication Tools, and Policy Influence Tools.



Bridging Research and Policy in International Development: An Analytical and Practical Framework, John Young and Julius Court, RAPID Briefing Paper 1, October 2004

A 4-page briefing paper outlining some of the theory behind, and practical application of the RAPID Analytical and Practical Framework. Better use of research-based evidence in development policy and practice can help save lives, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life. But for this to happen more effectively researchers need to do three things. First, they need to develop a detailed understanding of the policymaking process and the nature of evidence. Second, they need an overall strategy for their work and thirdly, they need to be entrepreneurial. Based on over five years of theoretical and case study research, the RAPID programme has developed an analytical framework and practical tools.



Does Evidence Matter? An ODI Meeting Series Monograph

ODI October 2004

Better utilization of research and evidence in development policy and practice can have a dramatic impact. Although evidence clearly matters, there is no systematic understanding of when, how and why evidence informs policy. This lunch-time meeting series provided an opportunity for researchers, policy makers and intermediaries in the UK to discuss how and why evidence informs policy. Speakers included politicians, bureaucrats, researchers, NGO activists and practitioners from UK government and non-government organisations. This publication provides summaries and full transcripts from each meeting, where speakers talked about the influence of political and institutional context, what sort of evidence they want and need, how research institutes can manage and use their knowledge more effectively, how NGO campaigns and think tanks achieve policy influence, and what makes a good policy entrepreneur.



Bridging Research and Policy in Development: Evidence and the Change Process, Compiled and edited by Julius Court, Ingie Hovland and John Young, ITDG Publishing 2005

This is a crucial book for international development researchers who want the lessons of their research converted into changes in government and aid agency policy. International policy making is extremely complex and little studied. This book reviews what we do already know and provides a conceptual framework for future research. Through four case studies, ranging from local to international and from theory to practice, it explores the vital importance of cultures and structures, people, places and timing. International development work attracts some of the most intelligent entrants to the world of public service, young people who want their commitment to the shaping of a better world to be reflected in the policies of the ministries and agencies they have joined. This book will help to explain to those young people, and to their leaders in the international development community, how to bring about the changes in policy that will promote a true pro-poor development, based on the evidence of what works.,



For further information, see the RAPID website: www.odi.org.uk/rapid