



## **Research-Policy Symposium Oxford, November 16th/17th 2006**

The development context is changing fast. As a result of the Africa Commission, UK Presidency of the G8, Make Poverty History Campaign and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness inter alia, development agencies and other funders have promised a substantial increase in aid, greater harmonisation and more budget support, and a renewed emphasis on the importance of science and technology in the development process. While continuing to deliver vital services, Civil Society Organisations are increasingly involved in government policy formulation and implementation, the media is becoming a more powerful voice in an increasingly democratic world, and private investment is the main driver of change in all but the poorest countries.

In this context, the effective communication of basic and applied natural and social science research and its transformation into knowledge and practice, by researchers, policy makers, bureaucrats and information professionals will be key to the achievement and progress beyond the Millennium Development Goals.

Similar processes have been the focus of attention in developed countries for the last two decades, with an explosion of public information on science and technology, and an emphasis on evidence-based policy. Many tools and approaches have been developed in the UK and elsewhere which may also be useful in developing countries.

Over the last decade, INASP has become an important player in improving access to scientific knowledge for southern researchers, policy makers and practitioners, and facilitating their contribution to local, national and global knowledge, and has developed a network of information professionals across 40 countries to support this. Over the last 5 years, ODI's RAPID programme has undertaken research and has developed some simple tools to help researchers, policy makers, practitioners and intermediaries ensure that knowledge gets into policy and practice, and is building a network of organisations in the north and south to help knowledge producers to engage with policy processes. There is an active community of academics, consultants and NGOs based in Oxford who are working on these issues with useful lessons to share, and keen to learn more about how their research or programmes could contribute more effectively to development.

This Symposium will bring together 60 network members from INASP and ODI together with northern and southern partners from Oxfam, INTRAC, IIED, IDS and others, and the development and evidence-based policy community in Oxford to share experiences on how information professionals, scientists and policy makers can work together to promote evidence-informed policy, and learn new skills.

The Symposium will be in 2 parts. The first "conference-style" day will include key-note presentations on evidence-based policy in the South and North, overview presentations exploring the role of researchers, information professionals and donors, and a selection of participant case studies followed by breakout groups to share current state-of-the-art knowledge and practical experience. The second "workshop-style" day will offer participants the choice from a number of more practical workshops introducing a range of potentially useful tools and approaches, with opportunities for participants to try some of them out.

## Symposium Outline

### Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November

- 09.00 Registration
- 09.30-10.00 An introduction to the Symposium
- 10.00-11.00 Two keynote addresses describing the practical reality, constraints and opportunities for more evidence-based policy in the North and South:
- **Dr Syeda Tanveer Kausar Naim**, Consultant, COMSTECH, Pakistan
  - **Duncan Green** Head of Research, Oxfam UK
- 11.00-11.30 *Coffee*
- 11.30-13.00 Three plenary presentations providing an overview of current knowledge and state of the art approaches to evidence-based policy processes:
- **Nicolas Ducote** Director of Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth, Argentina
  - **Buhle Mbambo-Thata**, University of South Africa Library Services
  - **Dylan Winder**, DFID
- 13.00-14.00 *Lunch*
- 14.00-15.30 Three case studies illustrating the challenges and opportunities to improving evidence-based policy:
- **Dra. Concepción Díaz Mayans** Cuban Ministry of Higher Education;
  - **Bola Fajemirokun**, Development Initiatives Network, Nigeria
  - **Rashed Titumir**, Unnyan Onneshan-Centre for Development Alternatives, Bangladesh
  - Host: **Tony Dogbe**, Participatory Development Associates, Ghana
- 15.30-16.00 *Coffee*
- 16.00-17.00 “Open Mic” session – comments and contributions from the floor on the key issues that have emerged during the day.
- 17.00-17.30 Final summary and round-up:
- **Andrew Barnett** Director, The Policy Practice, Brighton

### Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November

- 09.00-10.00 An overview of evidence-based policy processes and identification of tools
- 10.00-13.00 Three concurrent workshops providing an overview of issues, tools and other resources, an opportunity for participants to share their own tools and to apply a small number of tools to their own work:
- Tools to understand the political and policy context and engage with policymakers.
  - Research and project tools to generate convincing evidence which will convince policymakers
  - Information management, communication and networking tools to get convincing evidence into policy processes
- 13.00-14.00 *Lunch*
- 14.00-17.00 The workshops will be repeated after lunch so that participants will be able to attend 2 of the 3 workshops during the course of the day
- 17.00-17.30 Final summary and evaluation