

What is the evidence on evidence-informed policy making?

Lessons from the International Conference on Evidence-Informed Policy Making



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Abstract

In February 2012, over fifty delegates representing eighteen countries and four continents attended the International conference on Evidence-Informed Policy Making in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The purpose of the Conference was to go beyond anecdote and assumptions and to focus on the actual evidence *on* evidence-informed policy making (EIPM). During the three day conference, participants discussed research which has examined the communication of research to policy makers; the capacity of policy makers to use research; the incentives which drive policy makers to use research and much more. The resulting discussions were enlightening and stimulating. The conference revealed that even amongst those working in the field, there are divergent views on what evidence-informed policy is and how it relates to policy influencing agendas. It also became clear that in some areas there is a lack of robust research evidence. In particular, there is a shortage of evidence on policy makers' actual capacity to use research evidence and there is even less evidence on effective strategies to build policy makers' capacity. Furthermore, many presentations highlighted the insidious effect of corruption on use of evidence in policy making processes.

Overall, the conference played an important role in stimulating discussions and highlighting gaps in our current understanding of evidence-informed policy making. It is hoped that the discussions started at the conference will continue to influence the practice in this field so that work to support evidence-informed policy making *itself* becomes more evidence-informed.

Introduction

Advocates of evidence-informed policy making argue that the depth and quality of knowledge used by policy makers influence the effectiveness of policies. The uptake of research evidence in the policy making process is on the front burner of global discourses on approaches and strategies for development. It is therefore not surprising that international development agencies and other research funders are placing increasing emphasis on the need to communicate research evidence to policy makers. This has resulted in a flurry of activities aimed at supporting the communication of research evidence to policy makers.

The International Conference on Evidence-Informed Policy Making was held from the 27th to the 29th of February 2012 in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The conference organisers aimed to bring together researchers who have examined the process of evidence-informed policy making as well as representatives of both the academic and policy making communities. The programme of the conference was based on the

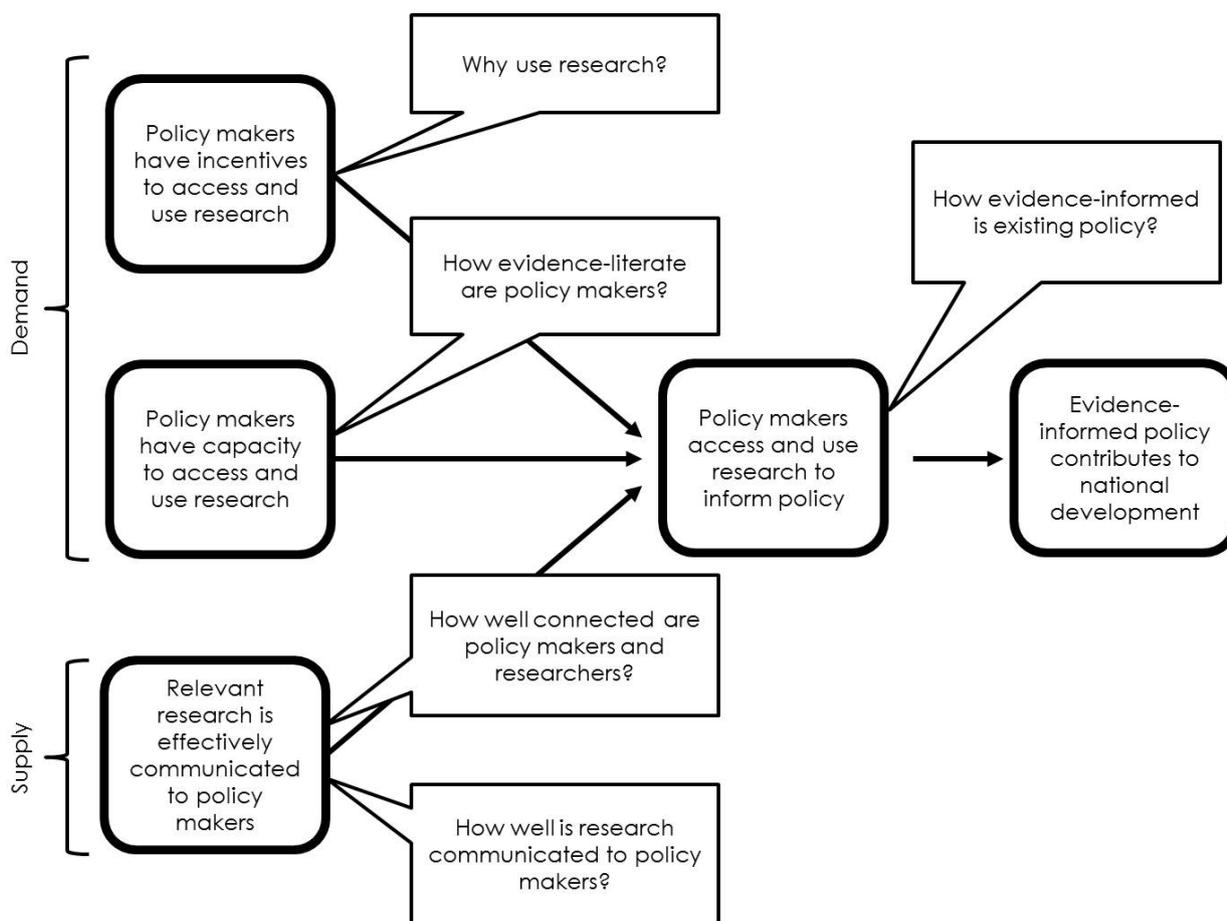


Figure 1: Theory of change on which programme was based including main sessions (shown in speech boxes)

organisers' theory of change (TOC) related to EIPM. A simplified version of this theory of change is shown in figure 1 with the major conference sessions indicated in boxes. The organisers accept that this TOC is not the only possible one however it reflects their understanding of the factors which contribute to evidence-informed policy making. It is particularly important to note, that this theory of change considers factors which affect the **supply** of research information to policy makers and factors which affect the **demand** for evidence from policy makers. An explicit aim of the conference was to focus on the demand for evidence from policy makers and in particular on policy makers' capacity and incentives to use research.

The discussions related to each of the session topics mentioned in figure 1 are summarised below. In addition to the sessions shown in figure 1, there was a session on capacity building which is also summarised below. In most sessions, the presentations contained information relevant to more than one theme and there were also a number of additional cross-cutting sessions (including a highly popular session chaired by the Alliance for Health Systems and Policy Research¹). Furthermore, there was a great deal of lively debate outside of the formal programme. Therefore, please note that information summarised under each heading may have been derived from multiple sessions and other discussions.

Why use research: Examining policy makers' incentives and motivations

Various presenters discussed research which examined the incentives and motivations which drive policy makers to make use of research evidence. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there was a general consensus that research evidence is a relatively minor factor in most policy makers' decision making.

Kene Onukwube (Nigeria) presented data from a study of 300 stakeholders (from public sector, private sector, research institutes and the community) in South East Nigeria which examined the incentives which drive policy makers to make use of research outputs in environmental management (Onukwube 2011). His conclusion is

¹ <http://www.who.int/alliance-hpsr>

that *'political manipulation and ambition seem to be among the strongest determinants of factors influencing policy development processes'*.

A study from Indonesia, presented by Ajoy Datta (UK), showed that research was used by policy makers but only in certain circumstances (Datta et al. 2011). For example, both researchers and policy makers mentioned that they are more likely to focus on an issue if it has been highlighted as a priority by the president. In some cases, research was used to back up pre-determined policy positions (discussed further below). Policy makers were also driven by personal factors including their own ethical stance and professional ambition. As one donor advisor interviewed by Datta's research team stated *'Even if technocratic or political – it doesn't matter – it's personality... it's 90% personality'*. Pressure to use research evidence could also come from external actors (including international organisations) or from the public.

The theme of public participation in policy making processes was further developed by Patnam Kumar (India) in his discussion of genetically modified brinjal (aubergine) in India. His paper traced the history of Bt brinjal which was initially approved for use in India following various biosafety and environmental tests but was given a moratorium after widespread concern was expressed at public consultation meetings. Patnam believes that public participation on science and technology issues is vital and the public should be allowed to comment on expert assessments. He concluded by discussing the new Biotechnology Regulatory Authority Bill of 2011 which appears to have reverse some of the previous emphasis on public participation. He feels it *'takes away 'the right to question' and shields itself from being 'questioned''*.

The theme of incentives and motivations to use research, and the effect of corruption and rent-seeking on these, emerged frequently during the conference. One particularly heated debate concerned the frequent requests from policy makers for 'sitting fees' in order to attend training or seminars which could inform them about research issues. Participants agreed that this practice is widespread in most of the African countries represented; however, opinions on how to respond to this differed. Some suggested that those who aim to inform policy makers about research need to just accept that paying these fees is necessary and should

therefore include them in their budgets. However others felt that continuing to pay such fees just propagates the problem and that those funding research communication and uptake work should take a 'zero-tolerance' approach. What both sides of this argument agreed on was that those who aim to support evidence-informed policy making need to acknowledge these issues and decide how they will respond to them from the outset.

How evidence-literate are policy makers: Examining the knowledge, skills and attitudes of policy makers

A large number of presentations focused on the capacity (knowledge, skills and attitudes) of policy makers to use evidence for policy making. Presentations revealed that at present there is rather little research evidence on policy makers' ability to use research. Most research in this area has examined policy makers' perceptions of their own ability and what they need in order to use research and, as stated by Kirsty Newman (UK) '*most people don't know what they don't know!*'. There is however a small body of research which attempts to objectively analyse policy makers' capacity and, encouragingly, a number of ongoing projects were presented suggesting that the body of research evidence will increase in the coming years.

Two presentations focussed on parliaments. Fanwell Banda (Zambia) described a study using an online diagnostic test aimed to assess the evidence-literacy (including information searching skills, understanding of research/science and ability to extract meaning) of the parliamentary staff of Zambia. Participants had all identified themselves as needing to use research as part of their job and were mainly parliamentary researchers or librarians. They scored poorly on most areas of the test. For example, only one in five was able to pick from a list the correct definition of a randomised controlled trial (RCT) while only one in three believed there was consensus that the CIA did not invent HIV. Chandrika Nath (UK) presented findings from a study carried out jointly by the Ugandan Parliament, the Ugandan Academy of Science and the UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology which examined the handling of science and technology issues by the Ugandan

Parliament (Nath 2011). The study involved expert reviews of research policy briefs (produced by research staff) and of plenary debates on science issues. There were some positive findings, for example some policy briefs on health issues were described as *'fairly well structured'* and *'impartial'*. However, overall the understanding and awareness of available research was low. One reviewer concluded that *'many important aspects of a balanced and evidence based discussion of the issues at hand are not addressed'* while another stated *'members are not clear about what the debate is about ... and ... frequently digress to talking about irrelevant matters'*.

A number of participants pointed out that while parliaments, and in particular the elected representatives within, are often the focus of efforts to disseminate research findings, they are in fact rather weak influencers of policy in many countries since policy is made by the executive. This policy is officially scrutinised by the parliament however, the extent to which this happens varies considerably. Akindele Famurewa (Nigeria) presented the report of a study which looked at both the Executive and the Parliament in Nigeria. The study, entitled 'Evaluation of Sources and Quality of Science and Technology (S&T) Information Available to Ministry Officials and Members of the National Assembly in Nigeria' concluded that both the executive and parliamentary staff report that they rely on quality S&T information in the policymaking process and have the capacity to assess, understand and utilize S&T information for effective S&T policy making. However, there is the need to strengthen this capacity for improved policy formulation and development. Irene Obago (Kenya), Ignatius Gutsa (Zimbabwe) and Kadenge Lewa (Kenya) discussed ongoing studies investigating the evidence-literacy of individual policy makers. Data is still being collected and analysed but preliminary indicators suggest that the policy makers investigated have low abilities to find, understand and use research.

Rather than looking at individual policy makers, a study presented by Emma Broadbent (UK) analysed policy debates between a range of actors in four countries (Ghana, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Zambia). She found that in the African context research evidence is *'not absent'*, but that understandings of what constitute research evidence varies considerably. Although the TOC on which the conference

programme was based had identified capacity and incentives for policy makers to use research as separate factors, a number of participants highlighted the interactions between these two. For instance, Emma suggested that in some cases, a lack of capacity to understand research was perceived as beneficial to policy makers since it 'allowed' them to ignore evidence and instead follow their own agenda. Thus, there is not only a lack of capacity but also a disincentive to build capacity.

Another participant noted that when senior decision makers in an institution lack capacity to understand research, they are unlikely to value research use and are therefore unlikely to introduce policies which incentivise evidence-informed decision making. Additionally, they may not choose to employ staff who are qualified to understand research in part because they don't value research and/or are fearful to employ staff who are more knowledgeable than they are.

Another perspective which emerged during the conference was that low levels of evidence-literacy in policy making institutions reflected low levels of evidence-literacy more broadly in society. In particular, participants blamed the school and university system for relying on outdated teaching approaches and failing to instil a culture of enquiry in their students.

Overall, the presentations painted a rather grim picture of policy makers who did not have the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and use research. Furthermore, it emerged that there is a significant discrepancy between policy makers' perceived ability and their actual ability in this area. Given that many institutions and training providers use self-assessment as a major tool for assessing capacity, it seems likely that capacity gaps are frequently underestimated.

How well connected are researchers and policy makers:

Examining linkages and networks

Different networking and linking approaches to bring together researchers, civil society and policy makers were presented. Such approaches make use of both virtual and face-to-face networking.

Three presentations concerned alternative approaches that can be used in order to connect policy makers, researchers and Civil Society Organisations. Julia D'Agostino (Argentina) discussed the experiences gained over the years by the Global Development Network (GNet) and the Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth (CIPPEC) working with diverse think tanks, research centres, universities and experts in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Julia especially highlighted the need to generate '*more synergies*' between different platforms, to promote the use of evidence among policy makers, to strengthen researchers' influencing skills, and to achieve sustainability of linkages.

Michael O'Dwyer (UK) presented an approach implemented by DFID to influence HIV policy for marginalised groups in Pakistan (Hawkes & Zaheer 2012). Michael recommended the need for involvement of those who were most affected by policies in advocacy efforts – for example in Pakistan they built the capacity of civil society organisations representing marginalised groups to demand policy change. He also acknowledged that realistic expectations of research impact should be set – in particular when research evidence is '*competing*' against strong cultural or religious beliefs. Maria Baron (Argentina) described the Fundacion Directorio Legislativo's approach in Argentina, aimed to build an area of constructive dialogue between policy makers and CSOs. Maria calls for a space of '*informal*' discussion among '*formal*' stakeholders.

The remaining presentations described how linkages and networks develop within different channels and in different contexts. Hailemichael Taye Beyene (Ethiopia), whose research is still in progress, considered the role of evidence in livestock policy making in Ethiopia. Hailemichael's preliminary findings are that the linkages among actors in the livestock development policy process in Ethiopia are not strong and that use of evidence in the policy making process is at an infant stage. Nnenna Nwakanma (Nigeria), by analysing the context of Ivory Coast, highlighted how social media can influence EIPM and constitute a platform for the action of an active digital citizenship. Her presentation explored the profile of these digital-citizens, their policy issues and how their actions have become a major motivator for policy

makers. Nnenna finally forecasted that social media *'will serve as an arm of government'*.

During discussion, participants emphasised the importance on including policy makers in the design phase of research projects. This strategy was felt to be useful in tailoring the research to policy makers needs but also as a means to secure early 'buy-in' from policy makers so that they were more inclined to consider results when they emerged. One participant suggested that policy makers can be invited to sit on research advisory board so that their input is sought throughout the research process.

While the early part of the conference analysed the demand side of the EIPM process, discussing policy makers' incentives and capacity to use and understand research evidence, the focus of this session moved to the channels that link research to policy makers. A number of participants commented that networks and linkages, even when well developed, do not suffice alone to address the lack of demand of research evidence from policy makers. However, these factors can help to raise awareness of research amongst policy makers and serve as a conduit for knowledge flow where the demand exists.

How well is research communicated to policy makers: Examining effective communication strategies

This session of the conference analysed EIPM from a supply side perspective – that is how effectively is research packaged and communicated to policy makers. In particular, the focus of the discussion was centred on the role of the intermediary institutions and how best the research can be planned and communicated to influence policy making.

Two presentations focussed on models for research/knowledge communication and packaging aimed to support EIPM. Jorge Otavio Maia Bareto (Brazil) described the activity of the Brazilian Piripiri Evidence Centre, which uses research evidence to inform health policy and decision making of the municipal government of Piripiri. The Centre's main outcomes are evidence synthesis, deliberative dialogues, and policy

briefs, which are communicated by means of digital dissemination. Glown Kyei-Mensah (Ghana) analysed the activity of Participatory Development Associates (PDA), a development consultancy in Ghana, in packaging and communicating with policy makers. In particular, she highlighted the Basic Needs programme – which used a *'photographic documentary on the everyday life of people with mental illness or epilepsy to influence mental health policy and practice that address the needs and rights of people with mental illness in Ghana'*. To sum up, Glown hypothesis is that photographs of real people suffering from mental illness is far more powerful in influencing opinions than any policy brief could be.

Debazou Yantio (Cameroon) presented his research on the impact that research findings on Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) had on policy making process in Cameroon. The study identified the critical factors at play that led to the lack of influence of research on the WSS policy implemented by policy makers in the country. Debazou proposed some specific recommendations to 'policy entrepreneurs' who want to have a significant impact on the policy making process – knowing their audience; including major stakeholders since the beginning of the project; setting policy influence objectives in the research proposal, and choosing the right (strategic) timing for dissemination.

Although one of the main objectives of the conference was to re-balance the emphasis that is given on the supply of research in favour of the demand side, the organisers felt it was appropriate to dedicate this entire session to approaches to supply of evidence. From the presentations and the discussion generated, three main themes can be identified on how to communicate effectively research and knowledge for policy influence: first, the importance that research and knowledge are produced, packaged and communicated by researchers and intermediaries who know the local context, needs and capacities of policy makers; second, communication and planning of research and information require strategic thinking and appropriate timing; finally, involving policy makers in the initial planning stages of research projects increases the likelihood of the research being used.

How evidence-based is policy: Examining the extent to which existing policy is informed by evidence

A number of presentations examined existing policies and examined the extent to which they had been informed by research evidence.

Martin Obermaier (Germany) explained the challenges encountered by the Brazilian Government with regards to climate change adaptation strategic policy planning for specific legislation and sectorial climate change plans. He compared use of evidence in policy making to evidence-informed medicine stating 'If doctors are expected to base their decisions on the findings of research surely politicians should do the same'. Martin found that evidence was used to inform policy decisions, however it tended to be limited only to issues of economic impact rather than on 'big picture' issues related to framing the debate and considering alternative options. In addition, he noted that evidence was often used to back up pre-existing political positions.

Martin's findings were strongly echoed in Emma Broadbent's presentation about use of evidence in African policy debates. She found that research played a relatively minor role in the framing of policy debates and that there was poor understanding of the differences between research and other forms of evidence. In addition, she found that research evidence was often used to back up pre-defined arguments. Thus while references to research evidence in policy debates were quite frequent, the actual role that research played in influencing policy was weak.

Rather than investigating a policy formulation, Taofeeq Yekinni (Nigeria) investigated the role that research evidence played in policy implementation. He focused on implementation of agricultural policies in Oyo state of Nigeria. He found that technocrats implementing the policy rarely carried out research to assess the needs of farmers. Neither did they carry out pilot implementation phases to test the efficacy of new policies. This lack of evidence contributed to significant mismatches between the priorities identified by farmers and those prioritized by the technocrats. This situation was exacerbated by high levels of 'leakage' of government funds – a problem identified by both the farmers and the technocrats themselves.

Two ongoing studies examining use of evidence in the development of a specific policy document were presented. Ng'ang'a Kibandi (Kenya) assessed the strength of research evidence called upon in the process of passing the Kenya Biosafety Act of 2009 by reviewing the draft bill and documented minutes of the various readings, committee report and the Act. Justice Nonvignon (Ghana) is exploring the relevance and use of health economics research in the development of health policies in Ghana by using the National Health Insurance Bill (2011) as a case study. Both presenters stressed the importance of using rigorous processes to assess use of evidence in policy making.

The debate following these presentations generated some main trends. It was noted that research-evidence is often used opportunistically to back up pre-existing political decisions/opinions (confirmation bias). Yekinni's presentation reminded participants that use of evidence is not only important for the development of policy but also for its implementation. Finally, the session highlighted the need for better tools and methodologies which could be used to assess the extent to which policies are based on evidence. The use of expert reviews of policy outputs was used in a number of studies and some further development and sharing of this methodology would be beneficial for the community.

Building capacity for evidence-informed research: Exploring capacity building strategies to build both the supply of and demand for research

There has been a great deal of interest amongst international development donors in stimulating demand for research evidence by building the capacity of policy makers to use it however, as yet, few approaches have been implemented and assessed for impact. The presentations discussed below introduced some innovative programmes for building capacity. There is now an urgent need to evaluate the effectiveness of such approaches.

Jesse Chigozie Uneke (Nigeria) led a capacity building project which focussed on targeted training in relevant skills for policy makers of the Nigerian state of Ebony

(Uneke, Ezeoha, Ndukwe, et al. 2012; Uneke et al. 2011; Uneke, Ezeoha & Ndukwe 2012). They aimed to *'[enhance] of policy makers' skills and organisational capacity in health policy and systems research evidence use'*. Uneke's model is based on shaping the training programme and delivery in a context-related manner. During the preparatory phase, key informant interviews and meetings with the policy makers served to identify policy makers' needs and perceived capacity constraints. During the second phase, questionnaires and focus groups were used to identify specific capacity constraints and formulate a strategy to address them. Finally, six workshops addressing the specific capacity constraints were designed, followed by evaluation (a pre-workshop assessment questionnaire and post-workshop questionnaire were administered before and at the end of each workshop to evaluate impact) and a mentorship programme (with senior university lecturers).

Participants at the conference were highly impressed by Uneke's approach. Many commented that such a sustained programme of training within a policy making institution is rare and that Uneke and his team should be commended for achieving it. Some potential improvements to the programme were suggested. Firstly, it was suggested that Uneke ensures that those training the policy makers had sufficient skills in delivery effective training so that the programme would achieve maximum impact. In addition, there was a suggestion that measuring participants' perception of their skills levels would not give an accurate measure of actual skills. Therefore, a more objective diagnostic test (such as the one used by Fanwell Banda in the Zambian parliament) could be used.

Nyokabi Ruth Musila presented lessons learnt and case studies from programmes of capacity building of policy makers delivered by AFIDEP in Kenya. Their model aimed to *'facilitate researcher-policy maker linkage and exchange'*, using workshops, conferences, symposia, and meetings. In order to advocate for the use of evidence for policy among policy makers, she believes that capacity builders need to understand them and their priorities including their political agenda, their individual passions/goals, their time constraints and their preoccupation with re-election. AFIDEP has found that linking events contribute to *'influence perceptions and break*

stereotypes that researchers and policymakers have about each other, enhance knowledge and skills of policy makers, and influence research priorities’.

While Nyokabi’s presentation highlighted linking across sectors (i.e. researchers and policy makers), Kenneth Oguachuba from Practical Action Nigeria highlighted a programme that links similar sectors from different regions. He is involved in the Evidences and Lessons from Latin America (ELLA) programme, which aims to share information about successful policy interventions in Latin America with policy makers in Africa and Asia. This programme is at an early stage but Kenneth was confident that south-south partnerships could be an effective mechanism for building capacity.

Catherine Fisher from the Institute of Development studies in the UK presented a framework for capacity building efforts which aims to support EIPM. She started by highlighting that *‘Evidence informed policy is not the same as policy influence, the first implies a change in behaviour/culture, the second a change in outcome’*.

Catherine presented five mechanisms (adapted from Walter 2005) which can be used to promote EIPM. The mechanisms are:

1. Dissemination of information (for example by repackaging and aggregating research information)
2. Supporting interactions between researchers and policy actors (for example involving policy makers in the design phase of research projects)
3. Using social influence (for example influencing public attitudes to research evidence by increasing capacity of media to report on research)
4. Provision of technical, financial, emotional or organisational support (for example offering training in use of evidence to policy makers)
5. Reinforcement (for example implementing policies in policy making institutions which mandate use of evidence)

For example, Jesse’s project (above) would fit in mechanism 4 while Nyokabi’s would fit in mechanism 2. Among her conclusions, Fisher acknowledged that ‘big P politics’ will always be a major driver of policy making but argued that this should not inhibit us from striving for increased and improved use of evidence. She also

pointed out that *'researchers cannot and should not address all of these issues'* and rather she called for those seeking to work in this area to collaborate and share learning.

Capacity building aimed to build both demand for and supply of evidence emerged as crucial tools for having more EIPM. Different models of capacity building were presented and the participants seemed to agree on the necessity to balance the dominance of supply-driven approaches with complementary activities to strengthen the capacity and motivation of policy makers to understand and use research-evidence for policy making.

Conclusions

The presentations and discussions at the conference were rich and varied and it would be impossible to summarise them all here. Nevertheless, there were a few key themes which participants seemed to return to and which generated the most discussion. These themes are summarised below:

1. Achieving policy influence is not the same as supporting evidence-informed policy making – however the two are often conflated. Policy influence refers to a supply-driven model where the results of one or more research study are promoted with the aim of achieving some change in policy (ranging from changes in actual written government strategies to changes in the language used in the discourse; see Weyrauch & Diaz Langou 2011 for more details). Evidence-informed policy making on the other hand requires both supply and demand for research. It implies a process where a range of research is considered and understood during the policy making process – along with other forms of evidence. **There is a need for further discussions and clarifications on these terms².**
2. There is a tendency for researchers and research intermediaries to focus their communication efforts on elected representatives and appointed officials but to ignore the crucial role that technocratic staff play in making and influencing

² These issues will be addressed in a forthcoming publication in the Institute for Development Studies Bulletin entitled 'Stimulating demand for research: what is it and how do we achieve it?' authored by Kirsty Newman, Catherine Fisher and Louise Shaxson.

policy. In addition, the functions of the legislature and the executive are frequently conflated and there is relatively little understanding of the role that evidence can play in the scrutiny process. **Those who seek to support evidence-informed policy making need to understand policy making processes.**

3. Supporting effective supply of research to policy makers is important – but such efforts will not lead to evidence-informed policy making unless there is also demand for research from policy makers. This depends on their incentives to use research but it also requires that they know what research is and how to use it (i.e. their capacity). The lack of work on the demand-side may be due to the inherent difficulties of this work – policy makers' are busy and may not be motivated to build their own capacity. In addition, the expectation amongst policy makers, particularly in Africa, that they will receive payment (in the form of a per diem, honorarium, travel allowance or sitting fee) for attending any training or learning event can make this work very challenging. **There is a need to stimulate the demand for research evidence from policy makers however it needs to be acknowledged that this is difficult work. It is only likely to be successful if there is full 'buy-in' from senior decision makers in policy making institutions. Interventions which are implemented need to be evaluated so that we know what works.**
4. In some cases the lack of evidence-literacy amongst policy makers may be symptomatic of a poor culture of enquiry in the wider society. Some believe that schools and universities are not instilling critical thinking skills in their students (although please note that this was a hypothesis which many put forward rather than a proven fact). **Supporting training of teachers and lecturers so that they pass on a more investigative approach to their students may be a long-term approach to supporting evidence-informed policy making.**
5. There is very little research which objectively examines policy makers' capacity to use research however that which does exist reveals poor understanding of research. Policy makers' perception of their ability to use research is markedly different to their actual ability. **There is an urgent need for more research which evaluates policy makers' capacity to access, understand and use research evidence.**

6. Research evidence is frequently cited in policy debates however it is often used to back up pre-existing political positions rather than to truly inform. **When investigating use of research in policy making it is important to understand the context and consider the political and economic drivers of decisions making. Just because a policy maker cites research evidence, does not mean the debate is truly evidence-informed.**
7. Corruption and rent-seeking are pervasive features of many policy making institutions. They are strong influencers of policy decisions and thus reduce the likelihood of policy being based on rigorous evidence. **Programmes which aim to support evidence-informed policy can either 'go with the grain' (i.e. accept a degree of corruption and rent-seeking) or can take a more active anti-corruption stance. However in both cases it is necessary to acknowledge and decide how to deal with these issues from the outset of a project rather than neglecting to factor it in.**

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Further reading

http://www.nacetem.org/events/report_on_international_conference.html

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