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The logo for inasp features a stylized globe icon composed of a grid of white dots on a dark background, positioned to the right of the lowercase text 'inasp'.

Building equitable knowledge ecosystems

Research and knowledge at the heart of development

ANNUAL REVIEW 2018-2019



Participants at a dialogue on research equity in Dhaka, Bangladesh, November 2018

Responding to change, with equity at the heart

Jo Beall, Chair of the Board

Adaptability is about drawing on your existing strengths, and having a breadth of understanding about your environment, to identify where the next big challenges are going to come from. INASP has been able to respond on the front foot to changes in the research environment because for a long time its mission has been to increase the visibility, capacity and involvement of scholars in the South and particularly scholars who might be overlooked even within their own countries. A key highlight for me this year has been INASP's work with gender and the role of women in research, the role of gender sensitivity and gender alert methodologies and design in research.

The world of research is changing, with, for example, big data. The research environment is much more networked and more equitable and inclusive than it used to be, and many research

institutions and funders, including in the global North, are recognizing the need for further inclusivity and equity in research and knowledge systems.

It has been a year of change, in the external environment and in INASP's work but INASP understands its place in the world very well, what it can do on its own and what it needs to work with others to do. That, combined with a really strong understanding of the external environment, and INASP's niche within it, makes for an excellent combination.

I look forward to following this work over the coming year, and beyond.



On the cover: Students in Uganda Martyrs University, one of the four universities in the Transforming Employability for Social Change in East Africa (TESCEA) partnership

Find out more at www.inasp.info/annualreview19

INASP REVIEW | 2018-2019



Reviewing our past to find our future



Executive Director John Young reflects on programme work over the past year and what we have learnt from it as an organization.

In INASP's 2017/18 review, my predecessor Julie Brittain reflected on how putting research and knowledge at the heart of development requires sustainable organizational change, and our commitment at INASP to be a learning organization and change ourselves. It has been a privilege for me to bring my own experience to this journey over the last seven months and to work with colleagues to learn from our own work and explore some new ideas as we develop our strategy for the next few years.

The past year has seen the start of major work with the DFID-funded SPHEIR programme supporting development of employability skills in higher education (see page 12). In our Sida-funded work supporting research and knowledge systems in the Global South, a series of dialogue events with local partners in Africa and Asia have helped us to better understand the challenges of inequity in research in national and international contexts (page 6).

We have continued to build on and support the AuthorAID project (page 9), Journal Publishing

Practices and Standards (JPPS) (page 14) and our work in understanding how policymakers use evidence (read more on page 10 about the role of the Context Matters Framework). We have also been building on links between our projects as we develop our work in research uptake (page 11).

What we are learning from our own work, conversations with partners and other experts and advisers reassures us that our work towards putting research and knowledge at the heart of development remains vital. But in this rapidly changing world we need to continuously re-assess how we can best contribute to this.

We hope you enjoy reading some of our highlights from the past year and look forward to continuing learning, and sharing our learning, for the benefit of our work in the rest of 2019 and beyond.

Do take a look at our annual review online for more detailed reflections, thought pieces and video interviews with staff and partners: www.inasp.info/annualreview19.

National conversations about equity in research

Inequities within and between research and knowledge systems prevent the full potential of Southern talent from being brought to bear on local and global challenges.

Equitable research and knowledge systems are crucial for enabling everyone to participate in solving global and local problems. In late 2018 and early 2019, in conjunction with local partners (see below), INASP helped facilitate dialogue events in Uganda, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and Tanzania. The events aimed to explore issues of equity in research, and brought together stakeholders from academia, government, and civil society.

Participants developed visions for equitable national research systems and identified champions responsible for advancing these agendas and carrying forward the momentum from the meetings.

Points that were emphasized and explored during the events included the need for strong national

“ Researchers across institutions never really meet to discuss about the sector as a whole across disciplines and with other important stakeholders. This has been very useful in bringing many diverse voices together to do just that. ”

- Participant in one of the dialogue events

policies and institutions to create a unified research system; the importance of pursuing diverse sources of funding; the recognition that both women and men must benefit from any solutions advanced to promote gender equity; the importance of technology to the realization of the envisioned research systems; and the need to improve the quality of research publications and apply internationally accepted standards.

The output from the four dialogues and the national discussions they sparked are guiding INASP’s work in 2019 and beyond. The national partners are now acting on the recommendations from these discussions.

Partners in dialogues

Bangladesh Academy of Sciences

Ethiopian Academy of Sciences

Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH)

Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

Gender mainstreaming throughout our work

Tackling gender imbalances within research and knowledge systems is an important part of bringing diverse talents and expertise to tackle pressing development challenges.

Gender barriers in research and knowledge systems have huge implications; they perpetuate discrimination and create different pathways for men and women. They prevent the creation and use of knowledge that can enable inclusive, just and sustainable development.

INASP promotes equity by actively addressing the needs of both men and women across all our work and addressing issues of power within the research and knowledge system.

Within the past year, this work has included:

- Holding dialogue events in four countries with a focus on gender issues, exploring gender-related equity issues within national contexts and

recognizing the contribution that women and men have made within their countries

- Working in partnership with universities within the Transforming Employability for Social Change in East Africa (TESCEA) partnership to integrate gender-responsive pedagogy
- Sharing the lessons and approaches from gender-responsive pedagogy in TESCEA with partners in Sierra Leone
- Continuing to support a gender balance in our online courses
- Supporting partners in Somalia to incorporate some aspects of INASP's Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education Toolkit within their own training.



Participants discuss gender issues at a dialogue event on equity in research in Ethiopia



Nepalese biologist Sabita Gurung measuring the length of mice tails for a rodent study, assisted by her mother. This photo won the 2018 AuthorAID 'Capture your Research' competition.

Learning as a social phenomenon

INASP's AuthorAID project aims to build the confidence, knowledge and skills needed by Southern researchers so that their research can be published and communicated.

Through our **online courses**, we've seen the impact and potential of social learning and peer collaboration and mentoring. Our two online research writing courses last year, in the natural and social sciences, saw high completion rates, with women making up 40% of the participants in the social science course and 43% in the natural sciences course.

We also ran an AuthorAID online facilitation course, which equips participants to supervise and/or facilitate their own courses locally.

We are piloting **online journal clubs** using different digital platforms and tools to suit our audience, and initial feedback suggests that this informal peer learning approach has been successful.



Journal clubs provide an online environment for discussing research papers, helping to foster peer support and building participants' skills in critical appraisal, subject knowledge and scholarly writing.

Over 800 people have signed up to the clubs. There has been sustained interest, with strong engagement from participants. The project is developing and flourishing organically, with participants taking the initiative to make the clubs their own.

Journal clubs in five thematic areas:

Environmental Biology, Chemistry and Toxicology
Biomedicine and Healthcare
Education and Research Communication
Social Science in Health and Development
Library Information Sciences and Bibliometrics

Context Matters Framework for improving evidence use



Context Matters Framework:
www.politicsandideas.org/contextmatters

Evidence-informed public policy is vital to equitable development.

INASP and Politics & Ideas produced the Context Matters Framework in 2016. The framework helps government agencies improve their use of evidence for policy making by better understanding the context in which the organization is working.

Last year, we put the framework into practice in Peru and Ghana. Using the framework to explore evidence issues at Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency resulted in a Change Plan focusing on strengthening internal processes and capacities shaping evidence use, as well as opportunities to expand the agency's collaborations with research institutions and other evidence producers. In Peru, the process enabled the Secretariat of Public Management to take an integrated approach to understanding evidence use and understanding external perceptions of the agency.

“ [The diagnosis has] begun to help us to have a conversation around the use of evidence in the agency, allowing us to develop an architecture that will help us use evidence and implement it locally in our work. ”

Ebenezer Sampong, Deputy Executive Director for Technical Services, Environmental Protection Agency, Ghana

We are now undertaking a diagnostic exercise in partnership with the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, using the framework to explore evidence use in two regional offices (South Asia and East Asia Pacific). In late 2018, through a partnership with Politics & Ideas and PACKS Africa, we also introduced the Framework to researchers and civil servants from across Africa via a series of masterclasses at an event hosted by the African Academy of Sciences, European Commission and INGSA.

The Framework has enabled us and our partners to improve our understanding of the external and internal organizational factors that affect evidence use, and we look forward to continuing to enhance our approach in the future.

Making connections to improve research uptake

A comprehensive approach to research uptake is needed for researchers, research donors and other stakeholders to maximize the usefulness and use of research.

INASP's emphasis on the importance of equitable knowledge ecosystems in building sustainable capacity for research production and use in developing countries has significant implications for improving research uptake.

INASP has a long history of supporting researchers to produce and communicate the results of their research, and working with policymakers and legislators to help them use evidence and knowledge in decision making.

Over the past year we have been building on this work to make connections and increase our work in supporting research uptake.

We believe that for research uptake approaches to be most effective they must be based on: inclusivity; a wide definition of evidence; a thorough understanding of policymakers and users; a strong emphasis on local actors; a holistic approach to capacity development: and adaptive, flexible and learning-driven approaches.

Making the links – and supporting researchers, policymakers and others to make those links – is a logical progression for INASP and an important opportunity to help ensure that decisions are based on the best and most contextually relevant research and knowledge.



Strengthening critical thinking in higher education

Transforming Employability for Social Change in East Africa

Many graduates in East Africa can be ill-prepared to address the challenges they encounter in the workplace or leverage their skills and ideas to meet social needs. One of the key factors contributing to this is the lack of focus on critical thinking and problem solving within university teaching and learning.

The Transforming Employability for Social Change in East Africa (TESCEA) partnership is helping young people in Tanzania and Uganda to use their skills and ideas to tackle social and economic problems.

The partnership includes Uganda Martyrs University and Gulu University in Uganda, and Mzumbe University and University of Dodoma in Tanzania. It also draws on the expertise of three Kenyan organizations – AFELT, LIWA and ASHOKA – and INASP.

The first year of the partnership has seen transformative learning workshops for teaching staff in all of the universities; formation of groups to connect the universities with industry and civil society; redesigned curricula for a first round of courses at each university; and work to ensure gender inclusivity.

“ Students are not empty vessels; they have a lot in their minds, they have their assumptions, they have their imaginations. When you give them the opportunity to interact, to share what they have, they will learn how to solve problems themselves. ”

Participant in a transformative learning workshop in Tanzania

Assuring Quality of Higher Education in Sierra Leone

INASP is also contributing to the development of a critical thinking course component within a partnership of higher education institutions in Sierra Leone, led by the University of Sierra Leone. The aim is to integrate critical thinking skills into curricula, enhancing the quality of higher education delivery. We are also sharing experiences from the TESCEA partnership’s work with gender-responsive pedagogy.

TESCEA and AQHEd are both partnerships within the DFID-funded SPHEIR programme:
www.spheir.org.uk



Participants from Mzumbe University, Tanzania taking part in an energizer activity as part of a TESCEA workshop in March 2019



Supporting Southern journal publishing standards and practices

Championing Southern journals is essential for redressing imbalances in the dissemination of global research.

Research informed by local context is vital for guiding policy and practice to address development. Southern journals are key components of the research ecosystem but face numerous challenges.

In 2017, African Journals Online and INASP launched the Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS), as a framework to support Southern journals to improve their publishing processes and standards and support their credibility.

JPPS has built its international reputation as an impactful tool improving equity in scholarly publishing, and in 2018 was named as a finalist for the prestigious ALPSP Award for Innovation in Publishing.

“ Thank you for your extensive feedback. We are very encouraged with this outcome. I will definitely work together with my editorial team members and improve on those areas that warrant change. ”

Journal editor

Over 900 journals in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Central America and Africa, have now been assessed through JPPS.

Editors are positive and enthusiastic about the process and are actively using the detailed feedback from their initial JPPS assessment to improve their practices and standards, achieving a higher ranking at their next assessment.

This year INASP invited selected editors to join an online course to support quality in editorial processes. The course was organized as a series of seven modules that editors could choose to take depending on their priorities and gaps. A total of 217 editors registered for the course and 59 completed all the modules.

Feedback from editors was very positive, with many making action plans for their journals.

Find out more at www.inasp.info/annualreview19



New approaches for supporting access to information and evidence

As library consortia now liaise directly with publishers, INASP looks to its future role in support to research information access for all researchers.

INASP has been supporting Southern institutions and their librarians to provide sustainable access to the information that their academics and students need for over 25 years.

As well as saving our partners a total of £79 million per year, by 2018 national library purchasing consortia in 13 countries were in a position to deal directly with publishers and to manage their access to subscription journals independently of INASP. Over the past year we have worked with consortia in a further eight countries so that all are now handling invoicing and payments directly, and from 2019 will agree subscriptions and prices directly with publishers.

Access to global scientific information and evidence is an essential component of a strong research and

knowledge system, and INASP remains committed to addressing inequity in access between South and North.

Over the last few years there have been significant changes in research and publishing, as a result of researchers' and research funders' needs and preferences, the expectations of potential research users, and the technologies which underpin the research and publishing process.

As needs continue to evolve, INASP has recognized the need to ensure that our thinking evolves too.

Looking ahead, with a lens of equitable research and knowledge systems, our focus is on support to 'researchers' wherever they are and on access to 'research' wherever it is.

“This is the beginning of a new stage for the Libraries of Honduras, which would not have been possible without the unconditional support provided by INASP. We will assume with great responsibility the new challenges of this new stage and we will keep you informed of each of the achievements.”

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Fields in Bangladesh. Photo by Haseeb Irfannulah

INASP thanks our funders for their support in 2018/19. For a full list of our projects see www.inasp.info/projects

