Implementing EIPM Training for Policymakers: Experiences from Kenya & Malawi

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AFIDEP in Brief

• Regional policy think-tank founded in 2010

• To help bridge the research-to-policy gap in development efforts in Africa

• Has offices in Kenya & Malawi, implements knowledge synthesis & translation programmes across Africa
  – Works hand-in-hand with various governments in Africa

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Why AFIDEP?

The Research to Policy Challenge

• Research is fragmented or missing
• Research not appropriately packaged
• Input of end-users rarely taken into account
• Local capacity to translate & apply evidence is weak
• Policies are driven by politics
AFIDEP’s Approach

We seek to contribute to the realisation of sustainable socioeconomic development in SSA

To do this, we conduct 3 main activities:
- **Synthesise & translate** research & related evidence
- Package, promote & enable **utilisation of the evidence** by decision-makers
- Strengthen technical **capacity in translation & use of research evidence** (i.e. capacity building)

Two main areas of work:
- Health Systems Strengthening
- Population Change & Sustainable Development

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Strengthening Capacity to Use Research Evidence in Health Policy (SECURE Health) Programme
SECURE Health focuses on addressing ‘demand-side’ barriers to research evidence use in decision-making in the health sector

Primary Objective:
Support strengthening of institutional & individual capacity needed to stimulate demand & use of research evidence in decision-making in the Ministry of Health & Parliament in Kenya & Malawi

- Lessons to East & Southern Africa through ECSA-HC

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1. Optimize institutional leadership & capacity to enhance evidence use

2. Enhance individual skills & capacity of policymakers in the health ministry & the legislature in accessing, appraising, synthesising & using evidence
SECURE Health is a Partnership

• SECURE Health is a consortium of 5 institutions partnering with MoH & Parliament in Kenya & Malawi

• Funded by UK-DFID’s Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) programme

• 3-year programme – Nov 2013-Jan 2017
Interventions for Achieving Obj. 1: Strengthening Institutional Leadership & Capacity

1. High-level national & regional advocacy to strengthen leadership & address institutional bottlenecks to evidence use

2. Develop a national health research agenda for Kenya & review the impact of Malawi’s 2011 National Health Research Agenda

3. Develop Institutional Guidelines for Evidence Use

4. Host regular science-policy cafés to strengthen linkages btn policymakers & researchers in deliberating priority health policy issues
Interventions for Achieving Obj. 2: Strengthening Technical Capacity for Evidence Utilisation

1. Develop & implement an EIPM Training programme for middle-level technical staff in the MoH & Parliament in Kenya & Malawi

2. Facilitate an internship programme with UK POST for parliament staff from Kenya & Malawi

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Internal Monitoring, Learning & Evaluation

- Baseline & end-line surveys
- Mid-term review
- Retrospective & prospective policy analysis studies to examine the role of evidence in actual policymaking
- Pre-post tests, bi-monthly interviews with EIPM trainees
- Gathering testimonials
- Newsletters, blogs, conference presentations & journal publications

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Evidence-Informed Policymaking (EIPM) Training Programme
Mid-level policymakers – technocrats in MoH & Parliament with responsibility for providing policy technical advice, drafting policy documents

**MoH**
- Heads of Divisions, Units
- Programme Managers
- M&E Officers

**Parliament**
- Researchers/policy analysts
- Committee clerks, library & information staff

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Main Objective of EIPM Training Programme

• Enhance the capacity of learners in:
  – Appreciating the complexity of decision-making processes & the critical role of evidence
  – Accessing research evidence
  – Appraising research evidence
  – Synthesizing research, and
  – Applying research evidence in decision-making
EIPM Training Programme – Key Features

1. Development of an EIPM training curriculum
   – Covering foundation of policymaking, defining policy questions, accessing, appraising, synthesizing & applying evidence
   – Informed by adult learning principles

2. Competitive selection of learners – faced challenges

3. Delivery of EIPM training workshops
   – Pre-training reading & engagement
   – 5-day training workshop – learners initiate development of a policy brief
   – Pre- & post-test survey; session evaluations
   – Learners’ contract

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EIPM Training Programme – Key Features

4. Conduct 1-year training follow-up programme for all learners

5. Present certificates of participation & completion only to those who successfully complete courses & present policy briefs at final dissemination activities
EIPM Trainers

• Trainers drawn from SECURE Health consortium (AFIDEP, FHI 360, College of Medicine, MoH)

• All trainers were trained in pedagogical training techniques & adult learning principles

• Trainers serve as mentors & review & provide feedback on policy briefs during follow-up process
## Breakdown of Trained Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kenya</th>
<th>Malawi</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>MoH</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop 1 (Mar 2015)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 2 (Apr 2015)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Trained (country)</td>
<td>40</td>
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So what effect did the training have immediately after?

*Some Highlights of the Pre & Post-Test Results - Kenya*
Immediate EIPM Training impact:
• The overall rating of the effectiveness of the training workshops in improving participants’ knowledge, skills, & attitudes for accessing, appraising, synthesizing & applying evidence was well above 4 on a Likert scale, for all workshops
Pre & Post Test Results-Kenya: Workshops – field-test, 1, & 2

Extent to which workshop objective was met:

• Workshop 1 participants rated all the objectives from 3.95 & above using the Likert scale 1 to 5
• Workshop 2 participants rated all objectives from 3.85 & above
• Field-test workshop participants rated all objectives above 4
Pre & Post Test Results-Kenya:
Workshops – field-test, 1, & 2

Effect of training on skills

• Participants’ ratings of their skills in accessing, appraising, synthesizing & applying evidence pre & post training revealed an increase of 1 or more points in the rating post-training
  – Indicating a perceived increase in the skills that the training covered

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Effect of training on Barriers to Evidence Use (barriers relating to technical knowledge & skills)

• Participants’ rating of these barriers improved, indicating that the training had helped alleviate the barriers.
• The main aspect of the workshop that was rated poorly was time allocation
  – With most participants indicating that the time allocated for the training was inadequate
What has been our experience with the 1-Year EIPM Training Follow-up Programme?
Why the EIPM Training Follow-up?

- Support learners in application of skills acquired (on-the-job support)

- Identify & address gaps in the training offered
  - Areas where learners need more technical assistance, & provide refresher training or on-the-job assistance

- Learn about how learners are applying skills acquired & challenges they still face

- Support learners in the revision & completion of policy briefs, with support from their supervisors
Structure of the Follow-up Process

1. Individualized contact with each learner via email/phone/face-to-face – once every 2 months
   • To find out how learners are applying knowledge & skills, the challenges they still face in evidence use, identify areas where they need support, & track progress on policy briefs

2. One follow-up workshop once every 4 months
   • To conduct refresher training on specific EIPM modules
   • To review & provide feedback on draft policy briefs
   • To show-case/deliberate policy briefs with senior policymakers

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Highlights of the follow-up programme

• Conducted 5-waves of the individual follow-up support process
• Conducted 2 sets of follow-up workshops:
  – Delivered short refresher training on appraising evidence & policy brief development (i.e. research evidence synthesis)
• Many examples of skills application:
  – Drawing attention to research evidence within their units
  – Finding research relevant to their work or the work of their units
  – Assessing quality of research evidence before considering it
  – Using evidence to draw attention to neglected issues
• 15 policy briefs completed in Malawi, 12 in Kenya
  – These will be disseminated at final workshops next month
Key Follow-up Challenges

• Actual on the job-support has been difficult:
  – Parliament declined, citing sensitivity
  – Many MoH learners have not been forthcoming on sharing real work tasks where we can support

• Progress on policy briefs development has been slow
  – Learners too busy
  – Poor Internet connectivity at work

• Poor turn-up at follow-up training workshops
How have we handled the challenges?

• More ownership & involvement of MoH/Parliament in the follow-up process
  – Extensive consultations with leadership of the MoH & parliament to seek their ideas & commitment to address the challenges
  – Convening follow-up workshops
  – Training follow-up contracts shared with Supervisors

• One-on-one or small-group follow-up consultations for those unable to come to workshops
How have we handled the challenges?

- Increased interaction between learners & trainers/mentors
- Systematized the follow-up process in order to collect comprehensive data to enable structured learning from the process
Key Lessons So Far
Well designed & implemented EIPM programme is effective in building knowledge & skills in research evidence use

- Pre & post-test results; quality of policy briefs developed

- Testimonials of how learners are using skills
  - Many show how learners are changing their thinking & approach to decision-making

- External evaluation results:
  - Revealed changing practices towards a culture of evidence use

- Huge demand for training at MoH & County level:
  - Kenya MoH has highly recommended EIPM training for counties
  - County leadership are demanding EIPM training – Samburu, Kakamega, Nairobi, Kajiado

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Lessons on specific training components

• Follow-up programmes in contexts with weak culture for evidence use & general accountability need careful & intense planning
  – Need to think about incentives - Is the solution close involvement of supervisors before & after the training?
  – Can drain project resources

• Anticipate failure & mitigate, or be clear on how to handle it when it happens
  – Good relationship with the leadership of the beneficiary institutions is critical
  – Find ways of gauging commitment of learners ...
Lessons on specific training components

• Collecting detailed & systematic follow-up data is critical for documenting learning from the programme
  – Helps make informed decisions on how to deal with unresponsive learners
  – Provides evidence for focusing short refresher trainings
  – Provides comprehensive data for publications to share learning

  – But, it can drain resources, especially in milestone-based fixed contracts
Reflections...

• How do we structure incentives for EIPM training & follow-up?
  – Is it a question of recruiting the wrong people? How can you effectively recruit the right people?
  – What are some of the innovative ways for overcoming the culture of attending training for training’s sake?

• Training follow-up programmes could be shorter – perhaps one year is too long?

• Is the over-reliance on consultants in drafting key policy & other documents killing capacity & commitment for MoH staff in capacity building efforts?
We Acknowledge our Partners

UKaid from the British people

Government of Kenya: Ministry of Health, Parliament

Government of Malawi: Ministry of Health, Parliament

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oo yea, eeh, best of luck now:-)