Presenting research results to policy makers

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What is the issue?

We want to do research that makes a difference, that has an impact, that is used by decision makers…

Presenting your research to policy makers

Two parts to this

1. Understand the context of the policy world (the DEMAND side)

2. Plan how to present your research in this context (the SUPPLY side)

Understanding the policy world

"If you want to inject more science *into* policymaking, you need to know the science *of* policy making"

So find out more about how the policy world works in UB.

Paul Cairney, 2016, The politics of evidence based decision making, Palgrave Macmillan: London, p. 119

What do policy officials want?

Want contacts with academics with whom they have existing relationships rather than someone they have never heard of

How can you build relationships?

Build partnerships at the start of research projects? Linking with other organisations that have influence?

Advocacy – building relationships

Advocacy - 'a continuous process of establishing relationships and creating a community of experts in/outside government that can give informed input on policies'

Not limiting engagement to a particular project.

Involves dialogue and debate with those we do not agree with

Build long term trusted relationships

Knowledge translators

Recognise the pressures on the policy-making process

Policies are made within the context of a network of actors and organizations with vested interests

Key players:
  policy holders (usually government politicians and civil servants)
  policy implementers
  policy influencers
  the media

Recognise….

1. Policy officials may not take any notice of research - other evidence and other influencers

2. Even if they are prepared to consider research evidence – recognise it can point in different directions or be uncertain and ambiguous

3. Limited organisational memory in government

4. It is hard to stop doing things you are already doing: Policy making is path dependent - easier to keep going on an already set path than create a new one.

5. Resources constrain what policies are possible

Consider doing a stakeholder analysis matrix

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS MATRIX

Name of individual, group or organisation	Likely interest in your research H/M/L	What aspects of your research are they likely to be interested in?	If interest is L/M, how might we motivate greater interest and engagement with the research?

THE DEMAND SIDE

Consider all of the above to inform how, when, and why you might best present your results to inform policy

THE SUPPLY SIDE

Policy and Data workshop, UB, May 2019

Presenting your results for policy makers

What are the characteristics of papers that are useful to inform policy?

Derived in the UK – so consider their application in Mongolia

Taken from Whitty, C. M. J. (2015). "[What makes an academic paper useful for health policy](#)?" BMC Medicine **13**(1): 1-5.

Papers that are useful to inform policy…

"They state explicitly the policy problem or aspect of a policy problem the paper addresses. This makes them easy to identify. A policy problem is not usually the same as a scientific problem, and may have several scientific problems incorporated within it".

Papers that are useful to inform policy…

"They are explicit about methodologies, limitations and weaknesses".

"The authors have made a serious attempt to minimise their own biases in both methodology and interpretation".

"They are timely"

Papers that are useful to inform policy…

"They should be as simple as possible (but no simpler) in methods and language"

Don't keep describing the problem in greater and greater detail without going the next step of saying what you have done to address it

You don't have to write a policy implications section – this is a professional skill

Types of paper most useful for policy

1. Rigorous and unbiased synthesis of current knowledge – *systematic reviews*

2. Papers that challenge current thinking with data (*'one point backed by rigorous analysis will have the greatest impact'*)

3. Models and economic models (*"provide an interactive interface, where if the policymaker does not agree with the starting assumptions of the model, they can change them".*)

4. Papers from the social sciences – *as most policies involve changing behaviour*

Characteristics of good writing for policy

Clear accessible jargon free language

Intuitive explanations needed - the value of stories.

Link to the big picture – recognise and work with overarching narratives

Whitty, C. M. J. (2015). "What makes an academic paper useful for health policy?" BMC Medicine **13**(1): 1-5.