

## EVIDENCE ECOSYSTEM MAP

### Making the Dividend Count: The Role of Communication in Bridging Demographic Dividend Research and Africa's Policy Processes

#### SECTION 1:

**Country:** Kenya

**Sector:** Population and Development

**Area of work this map relates to:** Science Communications and Evidence Uptake

#### 1. An overview of who the main role players are in the evidence ecosystem\*

##### ***Government (Ministries/Agencies)***

- The National Council for Population and Development (NCPD); currently under The National Treasury and Planning Ministry
- Ministry of Health
- Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA)
- Youth Enterprise Fund
- Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)

##### ***Academia***

- The University of Nairobi (Population Studies and Research Institute, PSRI)

##### ***Think Tanks/NGOs/INGOs***

- African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)
- African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)
- Population Reference Bureau (PRB)
- FHI360
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Big Win Philanthropy

##### ***Private Sector***

- Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE)
- Kenya Association of Manufacturers

##### ***Media Organisations***

- Kenya Media Network on Population and Development (KEMEP)
- People Daily
- KBC TV

*\*Majority of these groups are deemed as being key players by virtue of them being in the Technical Working Group (TWG) on the Demographic Dividend convened by NCPD. To what extent they are key players is debatable.*

#### 2. What gaps exist in the evidence ecosystem (i.e. what type of organisations/initiatives are currently missing)?

The link with the **Kenya Parliament** is missing – and yet, the legislature is key in not only formulating legislation critical for the implementation of key government policies, but also conducting oversight on the operations of the Executive, to ensure Kenya harnesses a demographic dividend. As such, the technical working group on the demographic dividend has representation from key government ministries i.e. health, education, treasury etc, but no members from the **National Assembly** or **Senate**. With the devolved system of government, it is also critical to include members of the **County Assemblies** as they are key in effective implementation of policies and programmes at the county level.

Further, the linkage with the media is extremely weak. While it exists on paper that there is media representation in the TWG, their impact is nearly non-existent in as far as reportage on the demographic dividend is concerned. Media representation should also target at least one media practitioner from the key media houses in the country e.g. Nation Media Group, Standard Group and Royal Media Services. The media houses represented here cannot be said to hold a lion share of the audience in Kenya.

Linkage with academia is also extremely weak. Currently, only a few Professors from the University of Nairobi have been part of demographic dividend conversations. Yet, the demographic dividend should be a national conversation, not limited to population experts only. Furthermore, the element of communication as being a key driver to ensure the robust demographic dividend research evidence is linked with policy processes is almost non-existent. As such, **institutions of higher learning** with a focus on **communication for development** are not part of the conversation – a major hindrance to progress.

Further, to the missing link with communication for development academic institutions, **communication and advocacy groups** are not actively involved in translating demographic dividend research into policy and programming. Therefore, much of the communication efforts have been left to a handful of communications experts (mostly those in think tanks working on demographic dividend research). However, much of the communication/knowledge translation efforts are often conducted by researchers themselves. This lack of direct involvement by communications experts therefore has led to missed opportunities to translate demographic dividend research into policy and programming. Some of the **communication considerations** include: framing – which largely determines whether or not the recipients of the key messages will take the action(s) expected, or not. Further, viewing the communication of demographic dividend research as science communication also calls for a **two-way communication process**; between policymakers and demographic dividend experts (be they researchers or communication experts). As such, demographic dividend researchers should either be well trained in communication, and/or they should involve communication specialists in their engagements with policymakers.

### **3. Are there bottlenecks or organisational silos that impede the flow of evidence through the system?**

The **lack of effective communication** by research producers on what needs to be done, particularly by policymakers, is a major bottleneck. For instance, the framing of

research evidence on the need for age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) for adolescents and youth has created a major divide amongst key stakeholders, more so with policymakers and religious leaders on the one hand, and researchers on the other. Framing has failed to take into consideration religious and cultural sensitivities in the Kenyan context. As a result, the critical link between CSE and the potential for adolescents and youth to achieve their potential and contribute to Kenya's socioeconomic development has been lost.

Another major bottleneck to the flow of evidence through the system is **organisational silos**. For instance, APHRC conducts research on the demographic dividend and ageing. However, the institution is not part of the TWG convened by NCPD. Further, much of the focus of the TWG conversations on DD, is on youth and the demographic dividend. While these two focus areas may seem disjointed, they are part of the same conversation. The result of operating in silos is that policymakers do not get consistent messages from the various stakeholders. Which means that government policy and programming do not benefit from the potential synergies of the various players in the demographic dividend research and advocacy landscape.

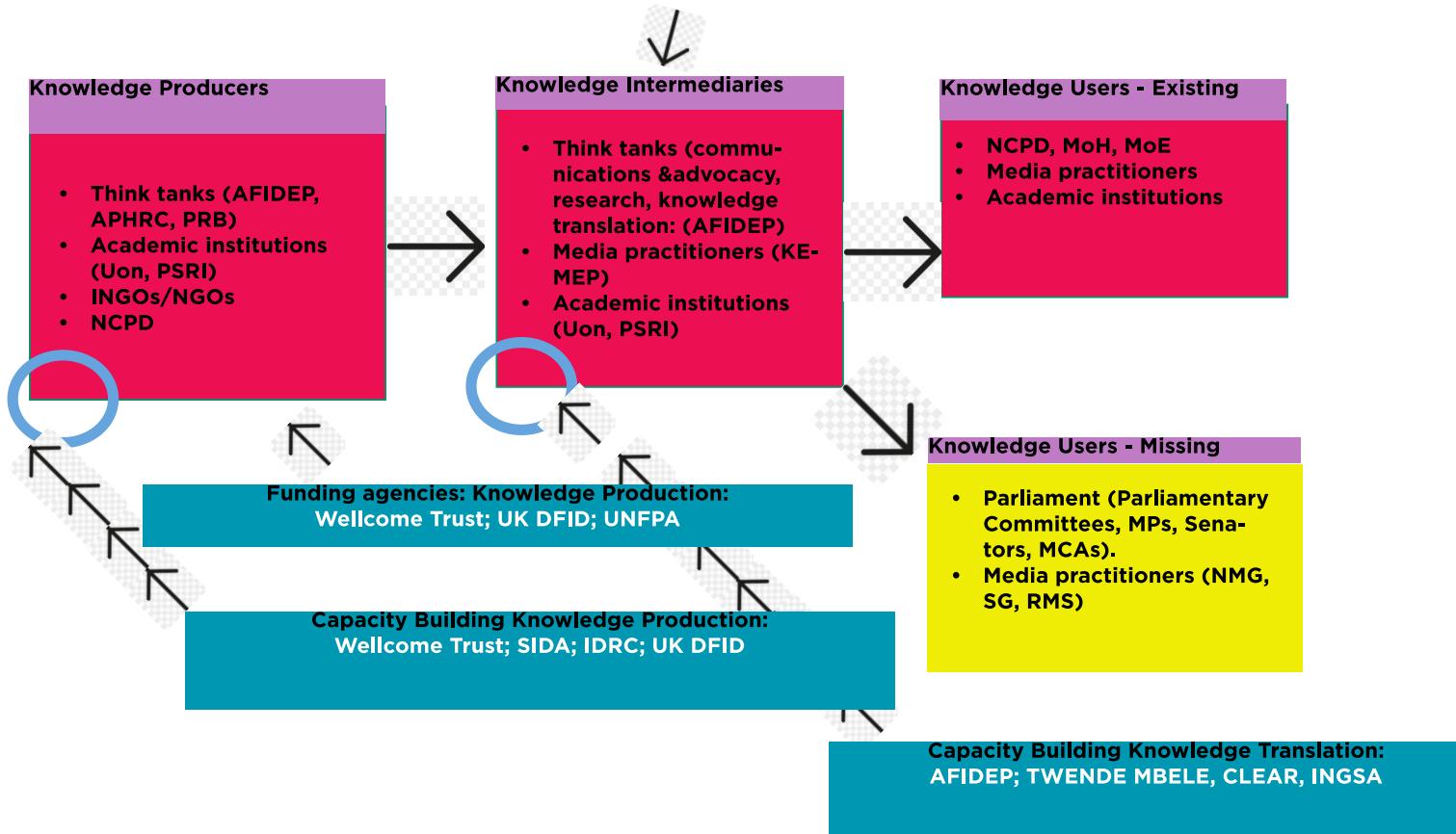
The failure by researchers and knowledge brokers/intermediaries to **engage with the politics** while pushing for evidence-informed decision-making is a major bottleneck. The reality is that public policymaking, programming, legislation and oversight, has a lot to do with politics and who is influencing whom. As a result, while engaging with technocrats in government ministries/agencies may be a sustainable way of ensuring evidence informs policymaking processes, the politics of the day cannot be ignored. Stakeholders working in the Kenyan context have failed to engage with policymakers, who are also politicians. This is closely linked with the missing link to the Kenya Parliament. As a result, the demographic dividend is not high on the political agenda. The consequence of this is that the conscious allocation of resources to sectors and/or initiatives, or formulation/implementation of policies that will help Kenya achieve a demographic dividend will not happen.

#### **4. What best characterises the relationship between research producers and users in Kenya? /the sector you are describing (e.g. distinct groups; co-producers of knowledge; etc.)?**

In relation to research on the demographic dividend in Kenya, research producers and users are **co-producers of knowledge**. For instance, NCPD is a government agency that coordinates population and development issues in Kenya. It has partnered with various producers of knowledge such as think tanks to generate research that is policy-relevant. A good example is research on the National Adolescent and Youth Survey (NAYS) produced in collaboration with AFIDEP in 2015, to identify challenges affecting youth and how these challenges can be addressed for Kenya to harness a demographic dividend.

However, this relationship only goes as far as the Executive is concerned. With regards to the legislature, research producers and users are **two distinct groups**, who rarely pick signals from each other. As mentioned earlier, this is an area that needs more work for the demographic dividend to receive the necessary attention from legislators in the Kenya Parliament.

**Funding agencies: Knowledge Translation; Evidence-Informed Decision-Making/Policymaking:**  
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; UK DFID; NORAD; WHO



## **SECTION 3**

### **Conclusion:**

- **What type of intervention/support would the system most benefit from?**

This system would benefit from an **effective communications and advocacy intervention** to improve the linkage between demographic dividend research and policy processes (both in the Executive and Legislature). The intervention would focus to ensure that knowledge intermediaries and producers of knowledge seeks to establish **close relationships** with policymakers in the Executive and Legislature; **frame** research findings in ways that will **stimulate understanding, build consensus** and trigger the **appropriate action**; and also ensure research findings on the demographic dividend (and other policy-relevant research) is shared with policymakers at a time when the **timing is strategic**.

- **Comment on how your map relates to the three themes of the Evidence 2018 conference: engage, understand, impact.**

This evidence ecosystem map emphasizes the need to understand the different players in as far as promoting uptake and use of demographic dividend evidence is concerned. It is only through understanding who the players are and how they interact that stakeholders can plan interventions that will ensure maximum impact.

- **Do you think that there are aspects of the engagement described in your map that work well and have potential to be up-scaled?**

The emphasis of strategic communication and advocacy can be integrated with capacity building interventions to ensure the key stakeholders, and particularly those with the power to effect change (policymakers) are reached in the most effective and efficient way possible.

- **Is there a creative metaphor to describe the overall evidence ecosystem (e.g. evidence jungle; research to policy highway etc.)?**

Evidence Maze