



UJ-BCURE workshop with Local Government in Malawi

During a recent visit to Malawi, members of the UJ-BCURE team took part in a workshop held in Mponela with representatives from the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD). The workshop was organised by the Parent and Child Health Initiative (PACHI), UJ-BCURE's implementing partner in Malawi. Key government officials such as the Director of Planning in the MLGRD, Mr Zwuwawo; the Head of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, Mr Kayira; and representatives from Mchinji, Ntchisi, Phalombe and Mangochi districts attended. The workshop was part of UJ-BCURE's needs assessment process, following a landscape review. The aim of the workshop was to develop a programme of work that will focus on strengthening evidence-informed decision-making in four districts in Malawi in 2015 and 2016. Representatives from the districts responded to a proposed work plan developed by PACHI in collaboration with the MLGRD, with input from UJ-BCURE.



UJ-BCURE representatives and workshop participants

LOCAL NEWS

How does one communicate with the general public about the evidence behind complex scientific issues, such as climate change? What influences how people perceive climate change and what will encourage people to modify their behaviour? These are some of the questions that this [blog](#) tries to address.

The [SECURE Health Programme](#) recently held its launch in Malawi during which it presented its needs assessment study to stakeholders. The study highlights challenges that policy-makers face in using evidence in decision-making. The Programme works closely with the Ministry of Health and Parliament to increase evidence uptake.

How has evidence been used in policy-making in Zimbabwe? [INASP](#), working with the Zimbabwe evidence informed policy network (ZeipNET) posed this question to policy-makers as part of their work to develop an evidence-informed policy-making course. Examples of evidence use stemmed mostly from the health, economics and technology sectors.

At the end of October, Research to Action (R2A) held their 2014 [Policy Brief Week](#) to share information on how to write more effective policy briefs. One of the topics explored in the week was the place of evidence briefs in the age of the Internet. Many other useful tips and tools were shared, such as how to plan and write policy briefs, as well as other resources on the topic that can be consulted.

Upcoming events

25th-28th November: Africa Evidence Network [Colloquium](#), Johannesburg, South Africa

11-14 January 2015: Education Association of South Africa ([EASA](#)) Conference, Limpopo, South Africa

March 2015: [Systematic Reviews for Policy and Practice](#), London

Announcements

Call for submission of presentation outlines, abstracts, and training session ideas. [ResUp MeetUp Research Uptake Symposium](#) (9-10 Feb, 2015) and Training Exchange (11-12 Feb, 2015) to be held in Nairobi, Kenya.

Not all statistics that relate to Africa can be trusted. As this article in the [Daily Maverick](#) explains, the accuracy of statistics about population size and the size of the economy is often in doubt. This might be because of lack of statistical capacity and regular recordkeeping.

What's the evidence on Evidence-Informed Policy-Making?

A DFID-funded initiative is seeking to bring together and understand more fully what evidence exists on Evidence-Informed Policy-Making (EIPM) in order to provide a basis for the evaluation of DFID's flagship **BCURE programme**. The project aims to build the capacity of policy makers to use research evidence more effectively in decision-making. An Evidence Review will be developed that will provide a practical resource summarizing existing knowledge about how to promote evidence use among decision makers. The hope is that this will prove useful to a wide range of actors around the world working on these issues. The review seeks to bring together literature from both within and beyond the international development field, with the evaluation team calling for input from actors from all fields that have an interest in EIPM. If you have literature that can help answer the six questions listed in this **blog** post then please contact andrew@commsconsult.org with suggestions.



Decisions..Policy ..or..Procedure..?

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Aid agencies were advised at the 3ie **London Evidence Week** to fund research in order to promote **knowledge building** in developing countries. In order to achieve better policy impacts, development agencies were also encouraged to improve their efforts to collaborate with governments.

A **Devex** study reveals different perceptions on RCTs by senior development officials. Whilst the use of RCTs is being promoted in higher learning and development institutions, the findings of this survey show that these were not common to senior development executives. Some officials professed their ignorance of RCTs, yet other management executives were of the opinion that the concept of RCTs has been oversold.

What are the arguments against evidence-based policy? A **blog** reveals that increased knowledge does not essentially result in improved or better policies. In some cases the extent to which policies affect citizens may in fact be unknown. It is argued that the production of evidence should not exclude public engagement as this could potentially impact negatively on development.

Kirsty Newman's **blog** discusses findings from a **study** by the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (Clear-AA). The study explores how diverse African contexts respond to evidence informed decision making. Results from five countries demonstrate the influence of patrimonial and neo-patrimonial systems of government on evidence and policy.

Evidence from academia

Systematic Review: Farmer Field Schools for Improving Farming Practices and Farmer Outcomes in Low- and Middle-income Countries

New journal **article:** Use of academic social research by public officials: exploring preferences and constraints that impact on research use

New journal **article:** Evidence and policy: discourses, meanings and practices

In what ways can academic institutions improve their collaboration with policy-makers in order to impact policy decisions? This **article** explores how academics can build a working relationship with policy-makers in order to promote evidence-based decision-making.