

PLANNING RESEARCH FOR INFLUENCING

USE THIS DIAGRAM AS A GUIDE TO YOUR OPTIONS AND REVISIT IT AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF PLANNING AND ACTION

Informed by influencing aims and objectives (problem, context) and gender analysis

1 WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO INFLUENCE WITH EVIDENCE? (indicative lists)

INFLUENCING OBJECTIVE AND POSSIBLE ROLES FOR RESEARCH

Change people's attitudes and beliefs, norms and behaviours:



- Identify and understand existing attitudes and beliefs, social/gender norms and behaviours; whether and how they are changing.
- Identify influences that support or limit behaviour change and/or policy implementation.
- Identify positive outliers that might lead to wider adoption/scale-up.

Change, implement government and private sector policies and practices:



- Demonstrate the human/gender/environmental impacts of policies and practices from local people's experiences.
- Show why policy and practice alternatives are feasible and likely to work.
- Change behaviours that hinder policy implementation.

Set the policy agenda, change the terms of debate:



- Document the problem and human/environmental impacts.
- Propose general principles; present a new angle on a familiar issue; make hidden and neglected issues visible.
- Present moral, legal, political, practical case for change.
- Demonstrate viable policy and practice alternatives.

Inform and strengthen civil society voice and strategies:



- Analyse context and trends.
- Assess what works/doesn't work for influencing.
- Provide learning from evidence and practice.

Informed by an initial power analysis and stakeholder mapping (including gender analysis)

2 WHO ARE WE TRYING TO INFLUENCE WITH EVIDENCE AND HOW? (indicative lists)

AUDIENCES AND EVIDENCE THEY RESPOND TO BEST

Policy makers/politicians:

- Short;
- Timely solutions that resonate with public mood and policymakers' values and priorities;
- Compelling stories;
- Big ideas;
- Positive visions.



Civil servants:

- Objective, rigorous, credible methodology;
- Data;
- Technical details.



Corporate executives:

- Company-specific findings;
- Comparative rankings vs other companies;
- Credible methodology.



Communities (geographic, identity, interest):

- Community-focused;
- Generated with their participation and participatory/action research.



Activists, supporters, general public:

- Human face to the story;
- Heroes and villains;
- Killer facts – easy to remember;
- Clear impacts of policy.



Media:

- Controversial, new;
- Human face to the story;
- Killer facts with numbers.



3 FOCUS YOUR RESEARCH!

1ST: WHAT'S ALREADY KNOWN?

Conduct a rapid literature review of what's out there.

2ND: WHAT NEW OR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH IS NEEDED, IF ANY?

What are the knowledge gaps and what do we need to add e.g. in relation to what needs to change, who has the power to achieve it and/or how – at different scales?

3RD: WHAT QUESTION(S) ARE WE TRYING TO ANSWER?

Refine and specify the question further

- Who, what, when, where?
- Is it a single case study, or comparative across time or place?

What sub-questions need to be answered to respond to the main question?

4 WHAT TYPE OR MIX OF RESEARCH APPROACHES AND METHODS WILL BEST ANSWER THE RESEARCH QUESTION(S) AND ENGAGE TARGET AUDIENCES?

OPTIONS INCLUDE:

Macro policy research methods:

- Investigative/journalistic approach
- Document/data analysis
- Key informant interviews
- Modelling/projections/estimates



Community-based research methods:

To collect qualitative data – semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participatory mapping, video, learning workshops

To collect quantitative data – household and other surveys, participatory ranking, numbers

Consider gender and intersectionality fully

Record quotes, take photos!

Macro-micro linkages: human interest case studies and/or stories illustrating the broader issues/injustices, killer facts and graphics

DECIDE HOW TO DO IT

5 HOW CAN WE ENGAGE AUDIENCES WITH THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND FINDINGS TO MAXIMIZE RESEARCH INFLUENCE?

Refer again to your power analysis, research design and overall influencing strategy and think of ways to involve key audiences and influencers in the different stages of the research and influencing process:

- Develop relations with key audiences.
- Plan the research together.
- Invite them to be a member of a steering or advisory group.
- Involve in data collection team.
- Share and discuss draft findings in a safe space.
- Ask them to comment on 1st draft report.
- Preview final report and speak at launch.
- Co-host a seminar on the topic.
- Discuss findings in a one-to-one meeting.



Are there important influencers whose cooperation is needed?

- Government ministries?
- Other national or local institutions?
- Key individuals at national or community level?



Communications:

- Decide how to frame the research, e.g. how to appeal to the target audience
- Decide what research products will be most effective and user-friendly, e.g.
 - Written report with short executive summary or overview (with detail in annexes, separate documents or on web)
 - 1-page policy/media brief(s) or well-placed blogs
 - Video clips, photographs, cartoons?



Timing and messengers:

Regularly assess context and make the most of windows of opportunity; use influential people as messengers



Ensure evidence is combined with complementary influencing strategies:

- Coalition-building;
- Using public campaigning;
- Engaging with the media.



This guideline has been prepared by the Oxfam Research Network for use by development practitioners and researchers, including Oxfam staff and partners. It was written by Martin Walsh, Ruth Mayne and Irene Gujit, with the help of Richard English and Duncan Green, and edited by Martin Walsh, Amy Moran and Helen Wishart. It was developed from an earlier Research for Advocacy diagram conceived and designed by Kate Raworth for Oxfam GB.

To download the Research Guidelines from Oxfam visit www.oxfam.org.uk/researchguidelines



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