

Global Mental Health Policy Influence Toolkit

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This toolkit was created in response to a report titled [‘Global Mental Health from a Policy Perspective: A Context Analysis’](#) produced by the [Research and Policy in Development \(RAPID\)](#) team at the [Overseas Development Institute \(ODI\)](#) for the [Mental Health Innovation Network \(MHIN\)](#). For more details visit: www.mhinnovation.net/

Overview of the toolkit

This toolkit was developed for the [Grand Challenges Canada](#) (GCC) ‘community of innovators’. It aims to provide researchers testing innovations in mental health with a set of tools to help them develop their policy influence or engagement strategy. If used together, these tools should help you decide what activities you do to change the way policy-makers engage with your project – and ultimately to see your recommendations and activities achieve better uptake with policy-makers and influencers.

GCC is one of the world’s biggest investors in research into global mental health innovation. Their portfolio of CAD\$32 million funding to 64 projects has fostered a community of mental health innovators focused on improving treatments and access to care. The Mental Health Innovation Network (MHIN) initiative supports this community. MHIN aims to facilitate the development and uptake of effective mental health interventions by enabling learning, building partnerships, synthesising and disseminating knowledge, and leveraging resources for mental health.

This toolkit builds on the findings of a [context analysis of the current global mental health policy environment](#), undertaken by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and published in 2014. The report conducted a survey into the experience and needs of GCC’s grantees in relation to policy influence, asking them to identify areas in which they will require future assistance to achieve better policy influence.

How to use this toolkit

The toolkit is designed to be used by project teams during planning days, team strategy workshops or in day to day planning activities. You should aim to involve team members with diverse roles, skills, experience and contacts in these activities, drawing upon the diverse perspectives within your team, for example ensuring involvement of implementers with significant field experience as well as senior management who may have stronger links to powerful stakeholders and decisions makers. For each tool, we have provided an indication of how long you will need to complete the task and

The GCC community of innovators engage policy-makers regularly in their work; out of 30 projects surveyed, one quarter stated that policy engagement was a core part of their job or something they were involved in more than once per month. The key areas in which the projects requested additional assistance were: how to communicate their findings better to policy-makers (which was provided in [a workshop at the GCC Seattle 2014 conference](#)); how to capture and share success stories with other mental health practitioners (which MHIN is now undertaking); how to better understand who the key players are and how to influence them; and how to understand their own capacities as project teams and what they can build upon. This toolkit focuses on the last two areas (understanding key players and their capacity to engage with them).

The [Research and Policy in Development \(RAPID\)](#) programme at the ODI has been working on research uptake and how to better influence policy for over a decade. Resulting from this research and work, and through the documentation of more than 100 case studies, RAPID developed a guide to maximising policy influence and engagement: [The RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach \(ROMA\) Guide to Policy Influence and Engagement](#). This toolkit draws upon three of the most practical tools from ROMA, as well as a selection of other helpful tools from other sources (particularly the health sector).

what materials you need. You can dip in and out of this toolkit as opportunities present themselves. For example, you may want to draw on a particular tool, or set of tools, to prepare for an upcoming meeting with a policy-maker, a public event, or when management is considering how to improve the project’s impact. Equally, you can use the tools to develop a more comprehensive policy engagement strategy or inform a communications strategy. You can choose to use just one or two tools, but they work best when used together and in order.

The four main tools in this toolkit are:

1. **AIIM (Alignment, Interest and Influence Matrix):** How to map the policy-makers, influencers and other stakeholders that are relevant to your project.
2. **Creating a policy influence plan:** How to develop activities for making changes happen in your policy influence plan (based on the work done in AIIM).
3. **Being a 'knowledge broker':** How to decide what role you play in communicating your message and whether others can play a role for you;
4. **Identifying and accessing 'champions':** How to identify and access champions to help your cause.

Policy engagement: what does it mean?

Before starting to develop a policy engagement strategy, it is important to think clearly about the type of change you are looking for and what policy influence and engagement means to your project.

RAPID employs a broad definition of **policy**, meaning the set of decisions that give rise to specific proposals for action. Many people equate policy with legislation, but it also includes non-legislative decisions such as setting standards, allocating resources between organizations, changing the levels of subsidies or taxes, decisions about whose voice to include in debates and what evidence to base decisions on. Policy is the set of decisions that make action happen.

Policy engagement is changing the general discourse or ideas about something. This means changes in the attitudes of stakeholders; changes in the processes of developing policy; changes in policy content; and

changes in the behaviour of people affected by the policy ([Making a difference, M&E of Policy Influence, Ingie Hovland, 2007](#)).

Policy influence is more direct. It's where you are actively trying to ensure that your ideas or findings *inform* the policy decisions that are happening. Ultimately, the policy may not be based upon your ideas, but you want them to at least be considered in the process, and thereby inform the policy. Policy engagement includes a broader range of activities, where you try to change the environment and inform the debate.

A good policy-influencing objective should be clear about why the changes you are proposing are important, who they affect, what needs to be done about it and where you stand in relation to others who are also trying to bring about change.

Mapping policy-makers, influencers and other stakeholders

Time: Generally takes 2-3 hours for one project.

Resources: Requires one large piece of flip chart paper, post it notes (20), marker pens, sticker dots (30) and approximately 3-10 people participating. A facilitator can be helpful.

What is the purpose: Understanding who your key policy stakeholders are, their relationships with one another and their attitudes to your project, is a key first step to improving your project's policy influence. Developing 'maps' of how well the various stakeholders are aligned with the project's aims, how much interest they have in the issue, and how much influence they have, is a valuable exercise. Ultimately, it is through them that change will happen. The tool then allows you to start to develop strategies and courses of action for the different stakeholder groups and refine your policy engagement objectives.

The Alignment, Interest, Influence Matrix (AIIM)

The RAPID team at ODI uses AIIM extensively in workshops with researchers and their collaborators. It can be done at any stage of the project: in the initial stages to understand the scope of possible engagement, or part way through to consolidate a team's thinking about who is involved and how they can sequence their communication and engagement activities as results begin to emerge. It can also be used to look back retrospectively at a project, as a monitoring and evaluation tool to track progress. AIIM is best developed in a group setting; the point is not just to produce a map, but to use the mapping process to focus discussions around who might be interested in the results of your work and the different ways you could engage with them. It can also help identify gaps which might otherwise be 'blind spots' in terms of new or emerging audiences, or potential enablers or blockers of change. For mental health this can also help to identify different groups inhibited by barriers such as stigma and help think about ways to overcome this.

Alignment: is the project likely to lead to change that the stakeholder broadly agrees with? Do they share the same sense of its importance?

Interest: are they committing resources to this issue? Do they want something to happen? Are they speaking openly about it?

Influence: to what degree can they sway the debate? Are they in a position of authority and can they use it to put pressure on decision-making?

Examples of these: *High alignment/low interest* would be a stakeholder that broadly shares the same objective but is unable or unwilling to commit resources to it—such as a civil society organisation with a very limited budget, or an NGO for whom the issue is just appearing on the agenda and so has no budget to assist you. *Low alignment/high interest* would be a stakeholder that has an interest in the same area as your project, but with an opposing objective—such as other health sector NGOs competing for budget, or a religious leader who believes that symptoms of mental illness have supernatural causes and that projects interfere.

Box 1. Alignment, interest and influence: definitions

How to do it:

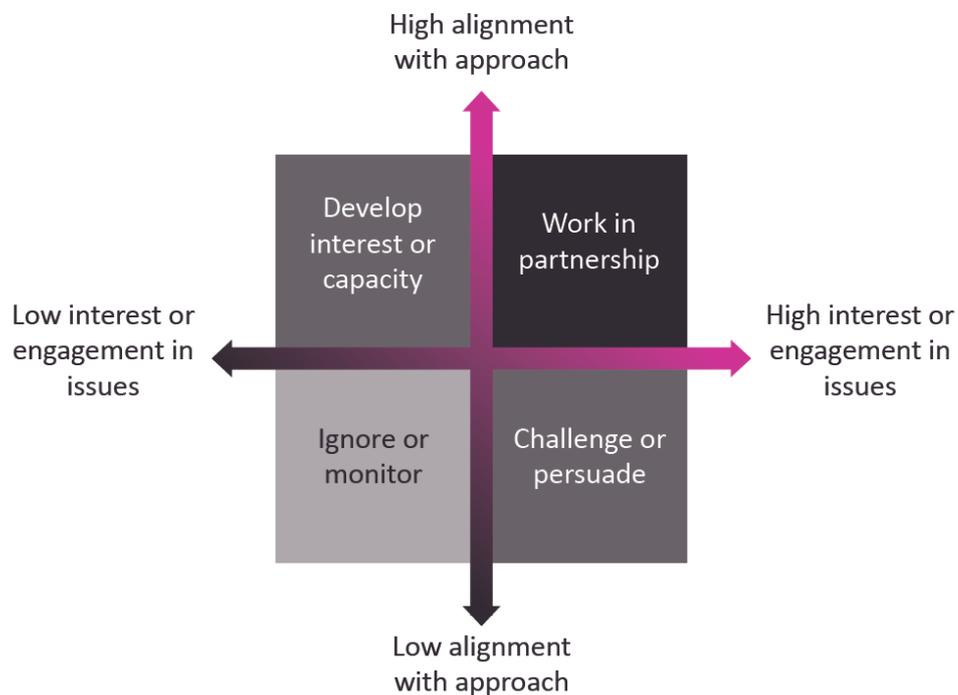


Fig 1: The Alignment, Interest and Influence Matrix (AIIM).

The steps:

1. In your group, discuss and identify your project's overall policy objective. For example, is it to produce precise recommendations on local mental health policy (or behaviours), or to provide evidence about a range of options that policy-makers need to consider? Be as specific as possible.
2. Put the piece of flip chart paper on the wall or somewhere accessible, and appoint a scribe who has the marker pen.
3. Draw two axes on the paper – the horizontal axis is for level of interest, the vertical is for level of alignment with the objective. This is your 'AIIM stakeholder map'.
4. With reference to your policy objective, get everyone in the team to list all the stakeholders they can think of - writing each one on a post-it note. As a starting point, this could include stakeholders like government partners (e.g. Ministry of Health officials), local community leaders, private sector actors, media, donors and healthcare workers. Don't just list 'donors' on a post-it note, but actually name the specific donors on different post-it notes.
5. Begin placing the post it notes onto the AIIM map. Their absolute position is less important than their positions relative to each other. Each person placing a post-it note onto the map should explain to the group why they are placing the post-it note in that position. This should stimulate either agreement or discussion from the group.
6. Don't be limited to a single post-it per organisation: if different teams or people have different degrees of alignment or influence, separate them out.
7. If the project is working in more than one country, or at both national and international levels, it is best to do an AIIM for each.

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8. Start to consider what groupings are on the matrix. Which quadrant are they in and what does that imply?
- i) Those stakeholders in the top right quadrant ('working in partnership'), are the kinds of actors with which you might like to form a 'community of practice'— after all, they agree with you and have a lot of interest in the topic. You could share ideas, coordinate information, co-organise events, swap readings or contacts. Stakeholders from this group could also become champions to advocate for your project within government or in the broader policy realm. See '[Accessing champions](#)'.
 - ii) Those in the top left quadrant ('develop interest or capacity'), are the kind of stakeholders you might like to energise or motivate. They agree with you, they are simply not that motivated or they have greater priorities. You could start to engage with them and develop a communications plan, share human-interest stories, reach out via the media and develop general advocacy work.
 - iii) Those in the bottom right quadrant ('challenge or persuade'), are the kind of stakeholders you need to convince of your viewpoint. They are very aware of the topic and may be passionate, but they do not agree. Evidence often works best with this set of stakeholders, so establishing a pilot or forwarding results, stories of impact and engaging in debates can all help. Using champions to reach that group (sending your message through others) can be useful too. In some cases, there may not be very much you can do with these actors.
 - iv) Those in the lower left quadrant ('ignore or monitor'), are the kind of stakeholders who do not know much about the project, or if they do, they are not very interested and probably do not agree with your views. If they are not influential in your project's success, you may prefer to ignore them as a group. Ultimately, you cannot do everything and may need to focus your energies on the actors in the other three quadrants. It may also be hard to know who these actors are, because they might not even be known to you.
9. Start to draw arrows of where you would like the stakeholder to move across quadrants. Pick those that are most important to your project. Five or six is enough. Each of these arrows represents a potential engagement strategy later (tool 2 – developing a policy influence plan - goes into developing these engagement strategies in more detail), so you will want to restrict them to five or six in order to ensure that you have a manageable number of engagement strategies to consider.
10. Now use the sticker dots to categorise the post-it notes (still on the flip chart map). If you do not have sticker dots, then coloured pens or symbols can be used. The sticker dots symbolise power or influence. If an actor has a lot of power over your work, place three sticker dots on the post it note with their name. If they have medium influence, place two dots on the post-it note with their name. If they have limited influence, place one dot. If they have no influence, place none. These should help you to prioritise whom to focus your energies on.

Constructing the map in a group will ensure you consider the full range of people and organisations that need to be included. Listen to the opinions of different members of the group and tease out the reasoning for why people consider stakeholders to be in that position, or why they feel that actor is especially powerful.

What it might look like:

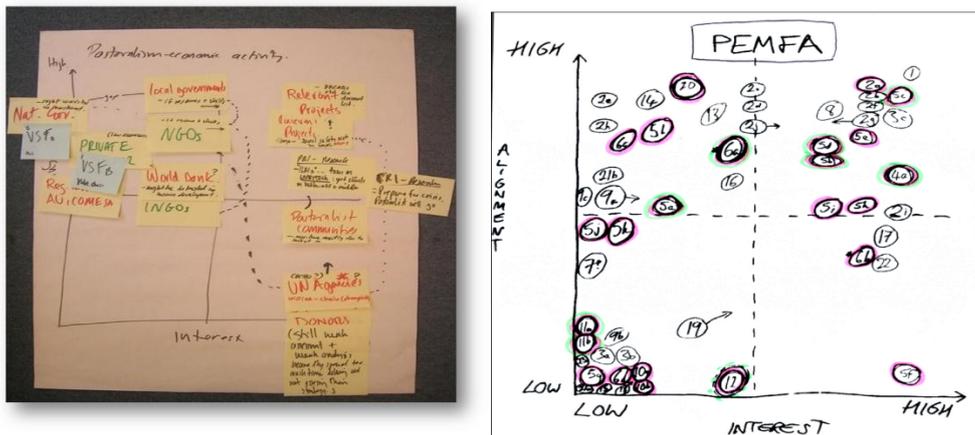


Image 1: Examples of an AIMM Map in action

Creating a policy influence plan

Time: Generally takes 2-3 hours for one project.

Resources: Requires 3-6 large pieces of flip chart paper, marker pens and approximately 3-10 people participating. A facilitator can be helpful. Works best when an AIIM map has already been completed.

What is the purpose: After completing an AIIM stakeholder map, the next step is to refine ideas of how the project’s work with these stakeholders might lead to changes in their attitudes and behaviour. This requires developing a policy influence plan. This can also be thought of as a ‘theory of (policy) change’.¹ This means considering how the stakeholders initially engage with the project, whether and how they take on board the key messages, and finally how they internalise the issues to the point where they can even act on the project’s behalf to spread the message themselves.²

The policy influence plan builds a deeper understanding of your project’s impact and impact indicators (beyond assuming broad change to policy and practice). It should focus on challenges, such as: poor relationships between implementing institutions, politics, decentralisation, lack of capacity for key tasks, budget shortfalls, and the ongoing challenges of making headway in complex and sometimes impenetrable bureaucracies. It is important to recognise these realities and capture them in your planning. Developing a policy influence plan will ensure that your understanding of what constitutes impact recognises these very real constraints.

How to do it:



Fig 2: Policy Influence Plan (Theory of Policy Change)

¹ See [Vogel, I 2012 A review of the use of 'Theory of Change' in international development](#) for a comprehensive review of theories of change.

² MHIN has developed comprehensive [guidance on developing and using theory of change](#) for project development and impact evaluation. This differs from outcome mapping-informed theory of change, focusing on developing a project approach through a review of existing evidence, significant stakeholder consultation and the conceptualisation of potential causal pathways to achieving impact through implementation, fundamentally providing a framework that is measurable, thereby supporting process and impact evaluation.

The steps:

There are numerous ways to go about developing a policy influence plan, but we suggest using the following steps, which draw on [Outcome Mapping](#):

1. Using your AIIM (from Tool 1) discuss the arrows that you have drawn, indicating where you want to move your key stakeholders. You are now going to flesh out the 'how' for each of these arrows.
2. Start to prioritise and group these stakeholders/arrows, listing them from 1 to 6. It may be helpful to use the sticker dots symbolising power and influence to inform this. Different people in the team may have different opinions about prioritisation, so ensure everyone is heard and has a chance to comment. You have limited time and energy, so selecting who to focus on is important. That is why it is limited to six. You are essentially creating a policy influence plan for each one. Stakeholders can be grouped together if, broadly speaking, the kind of outcomes you are looking for are similar and the strategies you will use to engage them are similar.
3. Put new pieces of flip chart paper on the wall or somewhere accessible, and appoint a scribe who has the marker pen.
4. On each piece of flip chart paper, list a different stakeholder or a different grouping of stakeholder. You could title one piece of flip chart paper for each AIIM quadrant group (four in total), or for each stakeholder type (e.g. donors, private sector, government), or for each key stakeholder. This will depend on the time/resources you have. We recommend one piece of flip chart paper for each key stakeholder (maximum of six).
5. Under the title of each stakeholder, create a matrix:

Desired behaviour change	What this looks like	How to achieve this
Expect to see		
Like to See		
Love to See		

6. Now (in the 'what this looks like column') describe the changes in behaviour you would: a) Expect to see b) Like to see c) Love to see.

Write the behavioural changes in active language, describing what you would actually be able to see. For example, 'greater gender sensitivity' is a good outcome, but it is not clear what it would look like. What you would see if a stakeholder was showing greater gender sensitivity?

These should be a graduated set of statements describing a progression of changed behaviours in a stakeholder. This distinguishes between three different levels of change:

- i. Changes we would **expect to see**: the early positive responses to your work (such as attending meetings convened by the project, giving feedback on a publication).
- ii. Changes we would **like so see**: active engagement with what you are doing (such as inviting you to attend one of their meetings, asking for information on project-related issues).
- iii. Changes we would **love to see**: deeper transformations in behaviour, which indicate that your messages have been completely internalised (such as appointing your project collaborator onto a standing committee, incorporating one or more messages from your project into a strategy document or taking a decision about resource allocation). These changes could also be more long term and may even take place after your project

has finished. The purpose of these changes is orientation – they provide the overall direction of change towards to broader vision.

The lines between the different changes are blurred, and it is a matter of judgement as to which change falls into which category. An ‘expect to see’ change in one context can be like to see in another.

7. Using the ‘How to achieve this’ column, identify what the project will do, and what others will do, to stimulate these changes. It may be helpful to draw upon some of the ideas below when thinking about how to achieve change:
 - Research
 - Involving users in your project governance
 - Developing, joining, strengthening a network(s)
 - Building/strengthening a partnership(s)
 - Working with the media (online, print, audio, visual)
 - Academic research communications (journals and conferences)
 - Digital communications (blogs, emails)
 - Publications (policy briefs, briefing papers, opinion pieces)
 - Negotiations
 - Events (public and private meetings)

8. As the team identify these behaviour changes, ask people to explain to the group the assumptions behind the behaviour change. Try to be realistic, think about access, budget and time constraints, for example, stating that the President will read your policy brief and allocate \$1 million to mental health is not realistic. Encourage people to articulate the real life complexity of the change process.

Your policy influence plans are not static. It is worth revisiting them annually, or more frequently if things are changing rapidly, to assess whether project plans need to be revised.

What it might look like:



World Bank - ~~Policy~~ Economic Growth Team

Behav. Change	LOOKS LIKE?	HOW TO GET THERE
Expect to See <i>short term</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in meetings when invited Acquire new skills in rec prot monitoring + management Contribute minimum resources 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Invite them, follow up, coffee, establish relationship. Keep meetings brief. Show documents. Training Share budget for project activities ahead of time. Explain what their \$ will buy. Get input on cost.
Like to See <i>medium term</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Start hosting meetings. Senior attendees. Contribute agenda. Articulate vision for model. Promote model widely. Hiring expertise. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Get management buy in - champion. Show value. Link to issues of interest for them. Get them thinking - research Get them to believe that will promote their own work/career. Senior champion
Love to See <i>long term - impact</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Playing a lead role. Sharing lessons and experiences w other subnational programs. International reach! 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Allow them to lead sometimes. Network - coord up LPK4. blogs reports. Generate ownership - media database Need to brainstorm further on this!

Image 2: Examples of Policy Influence Plans in action

More detail on creating a policy influence plan (if time allows)

Step 1: Analysing the current context

This first step is often overlooked, but helps develop a good baseline and thus a more accurate analysis of how change might happen and the impacts that might be possible. The depth of analysis done at this stage is project-specific. Some may wish to do a full-blown political economy analysis,³ but for researchers testing innovations through small scale or pilot intervention projects, it may be more appropriate to limit the focus to understanding the relationship between knowledge from the project and policies they wish to influence. (See also two background notes from ODI's [analytical framework](#), and [using it to improve programming](#)).

The key issues to consider are:

- **Knowledge and information.** What knowledge is currently used in debates around mental health? For example, is it knowledge from formal research; from past experience perhaps published as evaluations; is it widely shared opinions; or do ideas come largely from ideologies and beliefs? Which of these types of knowledge dominates?
- **Actors and stakeholders.** Whose voices are the strongest in debates on health locally? Who is currently seen as credible and why? What networks exist between different stakeholders? Are there stakeholders whose voices are marginalised? Who decides what knowledge counts, who arbitrates between contrary facts and opinions?
- **Knowledge intermediaries.** Are there actors who broker debates, bringing new ideas into the discussions, synthesising evolving understanding, and communicating with stakeholders? Are there other active disseminators, such as lobby groups, civil society organisations, press and media, who actively participate in debates around issues related to mental health?

For all of these three issues, consider:

- **Processes.** How does knowledge circulate? Is it written down, or is it oral? Is it public, or do critical debates and decisions take place in private networks behind closed doors? Does the political context⁴ affect how knowledge of mental health flows around debates?

The point is to look for any major aspects of the current context that may affect how change happens, particularly the sorts of changes you might want to see as a result of your project.

Step 2: Developing your plan

The lines between the three levels of change (expect to see, like to see and love to see) are blurred and it is a matter of judgement as to which change falls into which category.

Given our understanding of the current context, these are the behaviours we would...
expect to see... like to see... love to see...



Fig 3: Using Outcome Mapping to develop a theory of (policy) change.

³ See [DFID's how-to note](#)

⁴ This does not necessarily mean party-political issues (though could include them): it means issues where the balance of power between stakeholders is an important consideration in how they act and how they relate to each other.

This example shows the way a project might set out the changes they would expect, like and love to see for one of their key stakeholders, in this case, key officials in the Ministry of Health:

Expect to see	We would expect to see that key officials in the Ministry of Health have all committed to involvement in the project, and show this by active participation in the project initiation workshop. In addition, these stakeholders agree to meetings with us when we approach them.
Like to see	We would like to see the Ministry of Health officials agree to meetings to explore the scope of scaling up our project in the current area and future districts. They listen to our progress/findings and seem interested.
Love to see	We would love to see the local Ministry of Health officials agree to endorse us for scale up and they begin to investigate committing some small government funds towards the future of the project. In addition and as a result of this, we would love to see sub-national regulations begin to change to reflect the improvements we are piloting.

You can present the plan in a table, as above. It is helpful to separate out your general statement of what the changes will look like (e.g. ‘Department X begins to seek out emerging project results’) from more specific indicators (e.g. ‘Local collaborator is invited onto the standing committee for issue X’), which can be tracked. Dissecting the specific indicators of change, and ensuring that their sequence is logical, can be a helpful way of checking the overarching logic of the plan.

It is important not to assume that all ‘like to see’ behaviours (for example) have to happen at the same time across the different policy influence plans. Change in social processes is decidedly non-linear; people may block change for reasons that are not immediately clear, or they may suddenly get the point because of several things happening simultaneously. Most of this is outside your control. Developing different policy influence plans for different stakeholders helps you unpick the assumptions about how change happens.

If you have more time, a more in-depth matrix for your flip chart paper would be:

	General statement of change	Which stakeholders are involved?	Specific indicators
Current context:			
Expect to see: early positive response			
Like to see: active engagement			
Love to see: deep transformation in behaviour			

Table 1a: An initial policy influence plan

Step 3: Identifying the project's role, and checking assumptions

The final step would be to then – for each stakeholder – add in two columns: ‘what will the project contribute’ and ‘what will others contribute’ (so your flip chart resembles Table 1b below). You can add an additional piece of flip chart paper to the right, for more space if necessary. This helps you to look at the contributions made by your project and its team members, and contrast it with those made by others. The first column sets out what the project will contribute, and the second looks at what you are *assuming* about how others will contribute:

	General statement of change	Stakeholders involved	Indicators of change	What will the project contribute?	What will others contribute?
Current context					
	Expect to see: early positive response				
	Like to see: active engagement				
	Love to see: deep transformation in behaviour				

Table 1b: A final policy influence plan

Having gone through these three steps it should now be possible to revise your project's policy influence plan to:

- refine your understanding of the different types of impact your project can have;
- be clear about the limits to what your project can achieve and what needs to be achieved through others; and
- develop some concrete indicators of the impacts of your project and the longer-term impacts of your work.

Your position as a ‘knowledge broker’

Time: Generally takes < 2 hours for one project.

Resources: Requires two large pieces of flip chart paper, marker pens and 3-5 people participating.

What is the purpose: To help decide what role you play in communicating your message and whether others can play an advocacy/brokering role for you.

This tool helps to set the scene for the project’s communications strategy as it relates to policy influence. Thinking through this can really help to refine your communications plans and activities.

The key question is deciding what type of advocacy/brokering role your project needs to play. This may vary throughout the project life, but at least if you are aware, you can start to decide where you need to prioritise your efforts. It will also help you to determine whether you are always the best messenger for your research. Other organisations may be better placed to take part in debates, convene groups of people or lobby for a particular point of view. They should have all appeared on your stakeholder map, but in terms of developing a robust communications strategy it is helpful to consider your own comparative advantage and that of others.

Table 2 sets out the four different functions which form part of the process. These are:

Function	Typical project leader role (Examples)	What others may do (Examples)
Information intermediary: collating information and ensuring it is accessible (dissemination)	Preparing project reports, academic articles, briefing papers, web pages, presentations, using social media etc.	[Not much: the project’s responsibility, steered by the lead researcher]
Knowledge translation: ensuring that information is translated into formats understandable by different groups of people	Preparing briefs for policy-makers, web pages or blogs for the general public, guides for technical staff, (simplified) reports or presentations to local stakeholders (e.g. village committees) and project participants.	Setting project results in context of other work, synthesising this work with other similar work, arranging events that showcase the results in tandem with other results.
Knowledge brokering: active involvement in decision-making to improve the use of evidence	Engaging in ongoing discussions with key decision-makers, participating in expert advisory groups for policymaking, co-producing knowledge on project-related issues.	Using project results to engage in wider debates about change, building coalitions of like-minded groups and people, spotting opportunities for others to use project results.
System-level facilitation: enabling system-level changes to improve the flow of knowledge and opportunities for innovation. This can happen at three levels: individual, organisational and system.	Improving the capacity of individuals and organisations to continue this sort of work. At system level, changing conceptual understandings of mental health.	Committing resources to project-related issues (e.g. further research funds, support to networks). Putting in places structures and organisations that facilitate new networks, partnerships or collaborations.

Table 2: Communications functions, in detail

It is often difficult to distinguish exactly between the four functions, but they are systemically linked to each other (see Figure 4 below). Note that the form of communication changes as you move across the spectrum: from linear dissemination to co-production of knowledge.

How to do it:

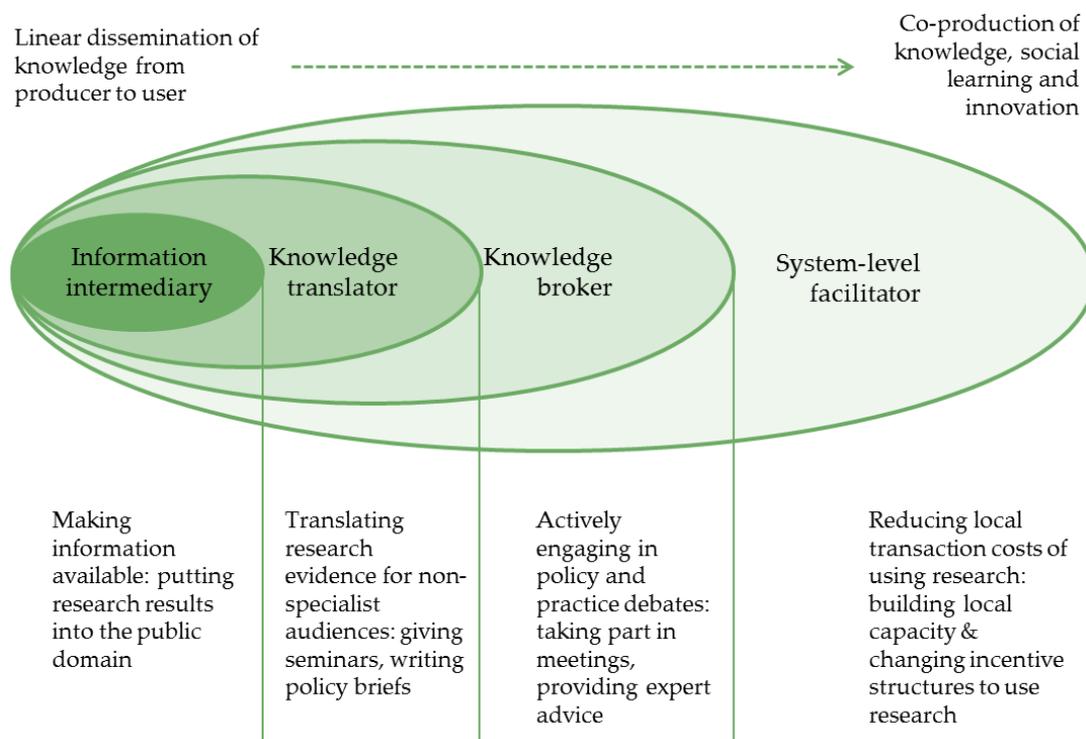


Fig 4: The spectrum of knowledge functions

Each project should not attempt to undertake all four types of function at once. Instead, plotting where you and your other stakeholders are situated on the framework will help you decide what sort of activities will be important at different stages in your project’s lifecycle (and who will be best placed to do them). Once these role(s) are identified, defining communication objectives and developing messages and activities becomes much clearer.

The steps:

1. Put the piece of flip chart paper on the wall or somewhere accessible, and appoint a scribe who has the marker pen.
2. Draw the above spheres onto the paper, replicating the four categories: information intermediary; knowledge translator; knowledge broker; and system level facilitator.
3. Ensure everyone is happy with what the differences are between the four categories (making sure they recognise that the boundaries are sometimes fuzzy).

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4. As a group, start plotting where you sit on the spectrum. You may need to place yourself in several of the categories if you think you are fulfilling several different roles. Highlight any that you think you do particularly well.
 5. As a group, start plotting where your other stakeholders sit on the spectrum.
 6. Discuss what the overall map looks like: where are you particularly strong or weak? Where are there gaps that nobody is filling? What might that imply for how you are able to facilitate the uptake of knowledge/evidence into policy?

After this exercise

It is important to remember that not everyone needs to do everything. After this exercise, link the discussion about what to do next back to people's mandates. Some may not have a mandate to be a knowledge broker and that is fine. If you find gaps, they can be filled in a number of ways: a) by changing your mandate, b) by working with others c) by finding new people to work with.

Identifying and accessing ‘champions’

Time: Generally takes 1-2 hours for one project.

Resources: Requires three large pieces of flip chart paper, marker pens, sticker dots (30) and 3-10 people participating.

What is the purpose: Works best when an AIIM map (Tool 1), policy influence plan (Tool 2) and the knowledge broker spectrum (Tool 3) have already been completed.

To identify and access ‘champions’ to help advocate for your cause. These should draw heavily on the stakeholders listed in the upper right quadrant (high alignment, high interest) of your AIIM map (Tool 1).

How to do it:

Policy Influence Activities	Potential champions	Support for champions

Table 3: Accessing Champions Tool

The steps:

1. Ensure everyone in your team understands what we mean by identifying ‘champions’ for your project. A champion is generally a persuasive advocate of a belief, practice, programme, policy or technology, who can influence and facilitate change in others. A lot of research on evidence-based policy-making has shown that having champions can make a real difference.⁵
2. Place one piece of flip chart paper on the wall or somewhere accessible and appoint a scribe. Create a table as above (Table 3).
3. Your group should decide what the project needs help with in terms of policy influence. Discuss what barriers you are facing that could be improved by better access and influence. Be specific and break these ideas into activities for your project. Examples might include: influencing a particular policy-maker, gathering public support for your project (which motivates policy-makers to respond to the issue), approaching the media to encourage them to represent the issue more positively, or helping to get your project director access to certain networks or forums.⁶
4. Write these activities on the flip chart paper in a list (Column A).

⁵ Flodgren G. et al, (2011) *Local opinion leaders: effects on professional practice and health care outcomes (Review)*, Cochrane Collaboration, Issue 2011:8, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. <http://apps.who.int/rhl/reviews/CD000125.pdf>

⁶ Be sure that these are not activities you could do yourselves, if you had the time and resources. Have a meaningful discussion in your project about whether these are activities and opportunities you should be prioritising. Do you have someone in your team who is a natural networker? One excellent tool for determining the skills set of your team and composition of skills is here: <http://onthinktanks.org/2011/06/20/what-kind-of-policy-entrepreneur-are-you/>

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5. Place a second piece of flip chart paper on the wall, or somewhere accessible. This is your 'potential champion map'.
 6. With reference to your policy objective, get everyone in the team to list all the champions they can think of - writing each one on a post-it note. You should try to select champions that you already know and have a relationship with. Try to be realistic about the likelihood they will spend time and energy advocating for your cause. The types of people to consider as champions include individuals who are already considered 'opinion leaders' in your sector, or especially influential or skilled. Try to think of champions from different spheres of influence. For example, for the advocacy of a public health issue, consider including a political leader, a health sector leader, a practitioner and a community member. Having multiple champions can help facilitate and institutionalise change at multiple levels.
 7. Now use the sticker dots to categorise the post-it notes on the potential champion map. If you do not have sticker dots, then coloured pens or symbols can be used. The sticker dots symbolise power or influence. If an actor has a lot of power over policy change in the local mental health sector, place three sticker dots on the post it note with their name. If they have medium influence, place two dots on the post-it note with their name. If they have limited influence, place one dot (though you should then consider whether they are really a champion). These should help you to prioritise whom to focus your energies on.
 8. Discuss which champions might be most appropriate to help with particular activities on the first piece of paper. Use the dots to guide this discussion. Allocate champions from your 'potential champion map' into Column B of your table on the first piece of paper.
 9. Think about what support you can provide to champions to enable them. Evidence shows that champions operate best with a small amount of financial assistance.⁷ Fill this into Column C.
 10. Discuss who in your team is best placed to approach the champion and request their involvement in supporting your cause. How much do they know about your project? Do you know anyone who is a friend of this champion who could begin the discussion on your behalf?

After this exercise:

Once you have approached and involved your champions there are three things you can do to help them be successful for you. Firstly, consider what realistic chance you have of creating an informal network of these champions, once they are involved. How might you convene it? Champions are more likely to be effective when part of an informal network of support.⁸ Secondly, try to involve champions in developing your advocacy work plan, and carefully assess the time frame needed to achieve the intended outcomes. Certain goals, especially those linked to policy change, may require a longer duration of advocacy than others. Thirdly, if possible, try to provide financial support for champions (such as a stipend and travel expenses) and talking points or other materials to implement advocacy activities.

Other resources which provide advice on how to select and access champions to advocate for your project in the broader policy realm: Engaging innovative advocates as public health champions, by FHI360

<http://www.fhi360.org/resource/engaging-innovative-advocates-public-health-champions>

⁷ <http://www.fhi360.org/resource/engaging-innovative-advocates-public-health-champions>

⁸ Ibid.

Additional resources for policy influence and engagement in global mental health projects

Here are some external resources that may also be helpful for Global Mental Health researchers and practitioners. They have been divided into categories to correlate with needs identified through ODI's report '[Global Mental Health from a Policy Perspective: A Context Analysis](#)', including topics like policy influence tools, communication tools and guidance for engaging with an aim to scale up a pilot.

Useful resources from GCC/MHIN/ODI training workshops

- Audio from a presentation by Jessica Mackenzie (ODI) on characterising mental health and recommending engagement strategies for the Mental Health Innovation Network: <http://mhinnovation.net/characterising-mental-health-and-recommending-engagement-strategies-mental-health-innovation-network>
- Audio from a presentation by Caroline Cassidy (ODI) on communicating research: <http://mhinnovation.net/communication-research> and policy briefs: <http://mhinnovation.net/policy-brief>

Scaling up tools

- Advice on how to disseminate information with a goal of scaling up pilot projects in particular. Nine Steps to Developing a Scaling Up Strategy, by WHO and ExpandNet: <http://www.expandnet.net/PDFs/ExpandNet-WHO%20Nine%20Step%20Guide%20published.pdf>

Policy influence tools

- ODI's **ROMA (RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach)** tool. A guide to policy engagement and influence: <http://roma.odi.org>
- Advice on how to engage stakeholders, in a quick and easy to access toolkit. FHI 360's **Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit**: <http://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/webpages/se-toolkit/quick-guide.pdf>
- ODI Briefing Paper on helping researchers become **policy entrepreneurs**: <http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/1730.pdf>
- A comprehensive set of **ODI tools for policy impact**: <http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/156-tools-policy-impact-handbook-researchers#downloads>
- Report on Evidence and Evaluation Policy-making from the Institute for Government looks at **supply and demand side barriers** to better use of evidence and evaluation in policy-making across the UK civil service: <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/evidenceandevaluationpolicymaking>
- The **Registry of Methods and Tools** (Canada) contains various tools for knowledge translation, such as critical appraisal tools, guidelines for appraising qualitative evidence and guidelines for communicating research. There is a focus on public health but the tools will be relevant for other topics too: <http://www.nccmt.ca/registry/browse/all/1/vieweng.html>

Communications tools

- Advice on how to plan your **public engagement** (including defining your audience, using specialist agencies and attracting your audience). Economic and Social Research Council's Public Engagement Guide: www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/impact-toolkit/what-how-and-why/public-engagement/guide/index.aspx
- A special issue of the Institute for Development Studies Bulletin focusing on **research communication**. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/idsb.2012.43.issue5/issuetoc>
- Advice on how to engage the media to **arrange a site tour or using film** to share findings in a more engaging manner. 'Obvious and not-so-obvious strategies to disseminate research' in Health Promotion Practices, by National Centre for Biotechnology Information: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16940026
- The **Digital Engagement** Cookbook offers a directory of techniques for running digital Research Uptake Guidance engagement and participation projects, describing them in detail and providing links to good examples: www.digitalengagement.info/2012/04/19/digitalengagementcookbookdirectoryofmethods/
- Advice on **how to communicate effectively in trade negotiations**, with some helpful tips for development projects wanting to be effective. Communication Strategies for Trade Negotiations, a practical guide: www.tradeadvocacyfund.com/cawp/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2014/01/Vol-I-Communication-Strategy-booklet-ENGLISH-LR.pdf
- Making Research Evidence Matter: A Guide to **Policy Advocacy in Transition Countries**: <http://advocacyguide.icpolicyadvocacy.org>

Research impact case studies

- Short impact case studies produced by the Economic and Social Research Council. www.esrc.ac.uk/impactsandfindings/featurescasestudies/index.aspx

Networks and email lists

- The **Evidence Based Policy in Development Network** (ebpdn) is run by ODI/RAPID and includes a popular email discussion list (with users from researchers to policy-makers around the globe) and a library of useful resources: www.ebpdn.org/
- The **Knowledge Brokers Forum** is run by the Institute for Development Studies and also has a widely used email list and host online discussions: www.knowledgebrokersforum.org/
- The **Outcome Mapping Learning Community** is a useful forum for those using Outcome Mapping in planning and monitoring and evaluation: www.outcomemapping.ca/
- **LSE Blog** on social sciences has useful blogs around research uptake: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/>