



research matters

A project co-funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), *Research Matters* (RM) supports the effective exchange and translation of sound and innovative research findings among a wide range of research-users and decision makers. This newsletter is published semiannually and contains updates about RM's projects, activities and products, with a specific focus on a topic that we believe is of interest to our partners. This current issue concentrates on **Bringing in the demand: harmony between push and pull** (see reverse).

NEW RM SUPPORTED INITIATIVES

Follow [EQUINET](#) as it seeks use **community radio** to extend outreach of key messages in the network, with a focus on the work and policy messages and issues for debate on fair financing and the Abuja commitment. EQUINET will also undertake a participatory communications project on health literacy and participatory research that will develop and communicate messages on health issues at community level and build skills in **media** to communicate these to wider audiences. *Tune in to the next RM newsletter to see where you can hear these radio spots!*

The [MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROJECT](#) will soon announce a revamped interactive multilingual **web platform** for researchers and practitioners to access MSP material as well as to post multimedia material and engage in discussions of alternative forms of service delivery. *We'll feature it here for you next time!*

As a global knowledge translation platform, [WHO EVIPnet](#) aims to support, expand and disseminate successful experiences in developing and implementing **KT tools, methods and approaches** in at least eight African countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Mali, Zambia and REACH-Policy: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania. *Stay tuned for policy briefs, National Policy dialogues, videos and other exciting activities from EVIPnet!*

RM PARTNERS

✎ [Health Research Web](#) – The Zambia and Senegal pilot projects for this soon to be launched wiki-like platform are complete! See the COHRED website for how HRWeb hopes to respond to researchers and governments alike with respect to coordination of health research globally.

✎ [ZAMFOHR](#) – This Knowledge Translation Institute has established itself as a credible and active broker for research to policy linkages in Zambia.

✎ [Health Research Capacity Strengthening \(HRCS\) Initiative](#) – RM is capturing the planning processes for the Kenyan and Malawian experiences in designing national health research coordination plans that aim to strengthen capacity for undertaking, translating, and utilizing research.

Podcasts, Briefing notes, Thinkpieces, Videos, Toolkits, Conference Reports, Mapping Tools...

Coming soon: Consolidated HRCS-like experiences in a publication for *Facilitated Participatory planning!*

RM Web Site Updates @
www.research-matters.net

Nasreen Jessani
njessani@idrc.or.ke
Graham Reid
greid@idrc.or.ke

Bringing in the Demand:

Towards the Harmony of Push and Pull

When it comes to "decision-makers," who are they and what do they need? How might research evidence influence policies? How might we "bring in the demand," where policies are research-informed and research is demand-informed?

Researchers and decision-makers often belong to two separate worlds. Where researchers solve problems *to know*, decision-makers typically solve problems *to satisfy*. They act in a world coloured by compromise. And no matter how compelling, research evidence is only one ingredient in the policy pie: our "piece" of evidence must compete for attention with the pieces of experience, expertise, values, beliefs, traditions ...

Evidence is fluid and evidence is fallible. Nothing is ever 100% true. So why would we ask decision-makers to base an important policy on something we can't guarantee will always be true? Politics and decision-making may seem like irrational sports, but the fact is that they, like science, have evolved over centuries, and have equally strong and compelling reasons for considering a wide range of "evidence" in their decision-making processes.

Moving from theory to practice, in this chapter we examine the demand side, and conclude with a discussion of three strategies for "bringing in the demand":

Linkage and Exchange

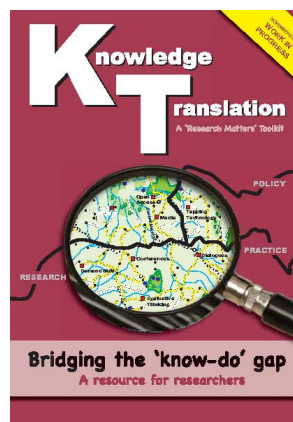
There are multiple ways of bringing decision-makers into the world of research - from identifying priorities to designing research to utilizing research findings - with each illustrating how we might move past researcher-driven processes into "co-production processes". We must pay attention to such important variables as how, when and why decision-makers might choose to become involved in the research process.

Knowledge Brokering

In an ideal world, a web of vibrant linkages connects researchers and decision-makers. In the real world, there is often a disconnect between the two that good intentions just can't bridge. Enter the knowledge broker. Intermediaries between the research and policy worlds, their core function is to connect people and processes. While they know research, their terrain is politics and power dynamics.

Knowledge Translation Platforms (KTPs)

KTPs aim to nurture and formalize the spirit of linkage and exchange. They serve researchers, decision-makers and other research-users by smoothing the movement of research to the policy level; connecting the needs of the policy process with research and researchers; and infusing public dialogue with an appreciation and understanding of research processes and research evidence.



To learn more on Chapter 2 : bringing in the demand and other Knowledge Translation Strategies, visit the KT toolkit online - its free !

www.idrc.ca/rm_kt_toolkit

www.research-matters.net