



Bridging evidence and practice: the experience of the Global Evidence Synthesis Initiative (GESI) Network members in Knowledge Translation

Tamara Lotfi, Elie A. Akl, Amena El-Harakeh
American University of Beirut

GESI Network: Serves as a platform for its members to share expertise and experiences and to facilitate collaborations between them.

As part of the 3rd African Cochrane Indaba 2019, the GESI Secretariat organized a panel discussion to provide participants with a contextual insight on the application of Knowledge Translation (KT) in African contexts, strengthening the engagement of policy-makers and active dissemination of knowledge. The panel was organized as interactive presentations by four Network members.

Panelists:

The panelists represented four members of the Global Evidence Synthesis Initiative (GESI)'s Network. Their expertise reflected the application of KT in several African countries.

- Allen Nsangi: Informed Health Choices Project, Makerere University College of Health Sciences, Kampala- Uganda
- Taryn Young: Evidence Based Health Care centre, Stellenbosch University, South Africa
- Witness Mapanga: Centre for Health Policy, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
- Arrie Odendaal: South African Medical Research Council

Witness Mapanga

Centre for Health Policy, University of the Witwatersrand Capacity Building in Knowledge Translation

- **Target groups:** district, provincial and national managers (DOH), clinicians, M&E specialists, researchers, academics, students
- **Required resources:** courses and training material; trainers and experts; logistics (venue, travel expenses, per diems, accommodation); M&E assessment tools
- **Platforms used:** short-term in-person instructor-led trainings; one-on-one sessions; work-based learning (communities of practice); journal clubs; academic sessions; online platforms

Key challenges

- Lack of clarity in KT scope
- Development of KT products that can effectively and timely respond to the needs of stakeholders
- Dealing with different target audiences
- Slow uptake of synthesized evidence by stakeholders (e.g., government, clinicians) affects the implementation of capacity building
- Lack of proper evaluation of the capacity building activities
- Lack of funding to support wide scale capacity building

Key success and support factors

- Collaboration and support of GESI partners in South Africa and globally
- Bold leadership, shared vision and coherent structure among GESI partners
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities among partners
- Active involvement of various stakeholder (e.g., Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME), universities)
- Motivation of partners
- Enhanced capacity of experts

Taryn Young

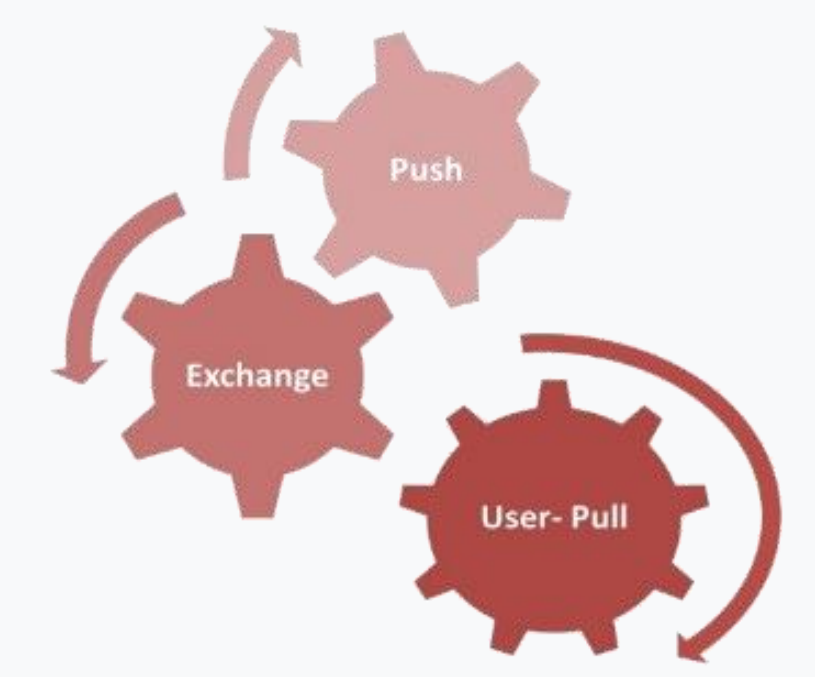
Centre for Evidence-Based Health Care, Department of Global health, Stellenbosch University

Policy BUDDIES – BUILDing Demand for evidence in Decision making through Interaction and Enhancing Skills

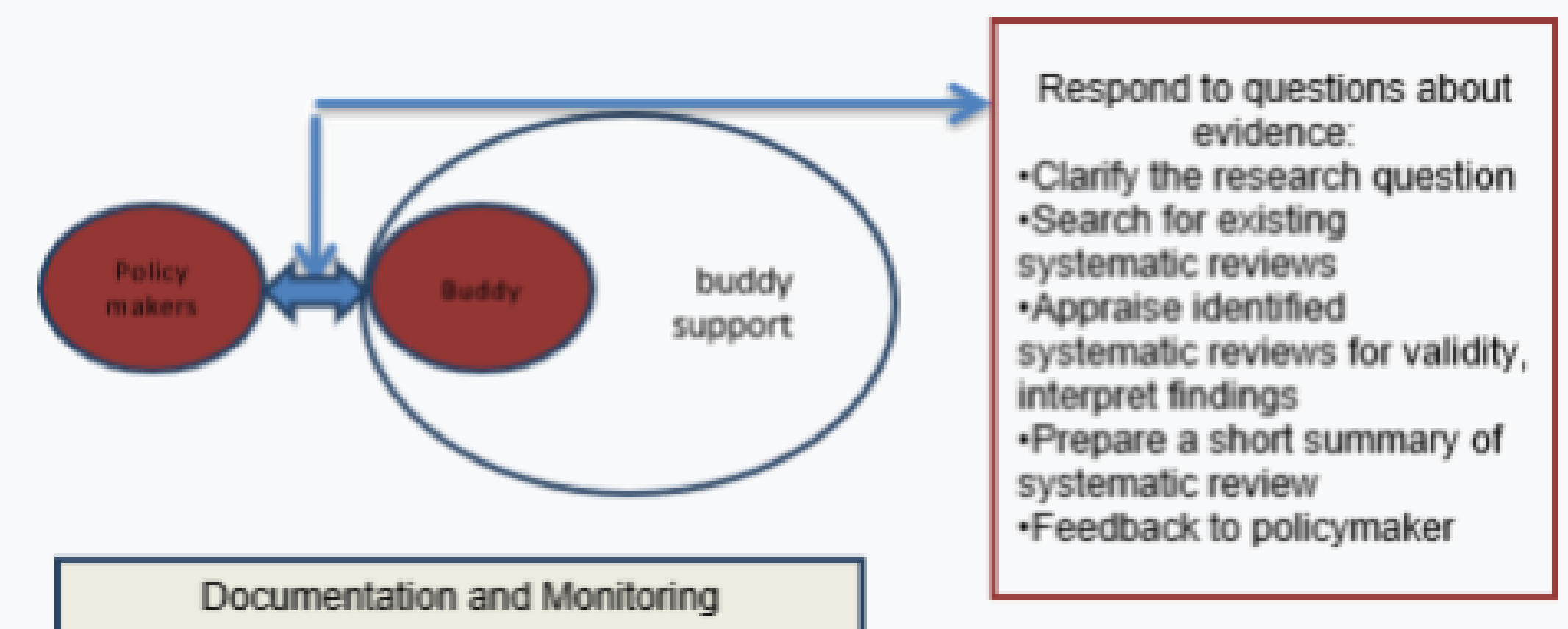
Policy BUDDIES: engagement of policymaker and researcher for evidence-informed policy

Strategies to enhance research use

- Joint efforts between researchers and policymakers with mutual trust and understanding each other's environment
- Workshops to help policymakers identify research questions and draw on systematic reviews to inform decisions
- Buddies: A 'buddying' model to create links between policymakers and researchers around specific priority policy questions.



Policy makers to understand the importance of research and its role in policies	Importance of joint efforts between researchers and policymakers	Researchers to understand the policy environment
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Allen Nsangi

Makerere University College of Health Sciences Informed Health Choices Project (IHC)

Stakeholder involvement in teaching children to assess claims and make informed choices

Informed Health Choices (IHC) Project

Empower people to make informed choices through:

- Improving critical thinking skills regarding treatment claims
- Enabling easy access to reliable information

Principles of stakeholder engagement

1. Purposeful (identification/prioritization of stakeholders)
2. Inclusive (urban/rural settings)
3. Timely
4. Transparent (clarify levels of engagement)
5. Respectful (setting clear boundaries)

Key challenges

- Political environment and bureaucracy
- Inadequate skills, miscommunication, and misreporting of scientific facts

Key success and support factors

Credibility:

- Links between researchers and teachers initiated by the policy
- Participation of certain stakeholders

Stakeholders engaged in developing the IHC learning resources

- Children: transition agents
- Teachers: implementers
- Policymakers: facilitators of change and gate keepers
- Researchers: evidence generators
- Community and religious leaders, parents and media practitioners: facilitators of dissemination of knowledge

Methods of engagement: policy dialogues, key informant interviews, brain storming and workshops

Lessons learnt

- Policy questions are not only about effects—other types are equally important
- Policymakers respect researchers' objectivity
- A structured relationship opens windows of opportunities
- Responding to policymakers' requests is time consuming and requires flexibility
- Having champions facilitates dialogue
- Having a support network helps researchers respond
- Continued researcher–policymaker engagement to promote evidence-informed policymaking cannot be sustained without dedicated time and resources

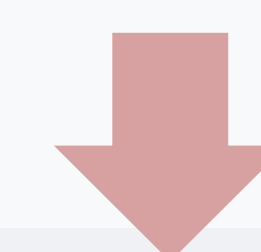
Arrie Odendaal

South African Medical Research Council

They are not from mars and we are not from Venus ... or are we?

Training programme

- What is evidence-synthesis?
- Reading reviews of effectiveness and qualitative reviews
- Using PICO to frame your question
- Searching for evidence on your question
- Decision-makers and researchers: Getting to know each other's worlds



Lessons learnt

- Engagement requires commitment from decision-makers and researchers
- Partnership with other SA GESI collaborating centres is a key for successful training
- Funding allowed for training to take place
- Provision of rapid evidence syntheses requires clarifying the question, is time consuming, and should be continuous

The Global Evidence Synthesis Initiative (GESI) Network

The GESI Secretariat has created a global Network of established Evidence Synthesis Centers based in Low & Middle Income Countries.

The Network currently includes 47 centres from 25 LMICs, specializing in different sectors.

For more information, visit www.gesiinitiative.com