

**VAKA  
YIKO**



**APPROACHES  
TO DEVELOPING  
CAPACITY FOR THE  
USE OF EVIDENCE  
IN POLICY MAKING**



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# ACRONYMS

<b>ACTS</b>	The African Centre for Technology Studies
<b>BCURE</b>	Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence programme
<b>CIS</b>	Centre for Social Research
<b>CONCYTEC</b>	Technology and Technological Innovation (Peru)
<b>CORPOICA</b>	Colombian Agricultural Research Corporation
<b>CSTC</b>	Civil Service Training Centre (Ghana)
<b>DFID</b>	UK Department for International Development
<b>DoVVSU</b>	Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (Ghana)
<b>DPME</b>	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>DRS</b>	Department of Research Services
<b>DRS</b>	Parliament of Uganda's Department of Research Services
<b>DST</b>	Department of Science and Technology
<b>EIPM</b>	evidence-informed policy making
<b>FMoH</b>	Federal Ministry of Health (Ethiopia)
<b>FOSIS</b>	Fund for Solidarity and Social Investment
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>GINKS</b>	Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing
<b>HSRC</b>	Human Sciences Research Council (South Africa)
<b>ICT4D</b>	communication technologies for development
<b>INFO-LIT</b>	Improving Information Literacy for Urban Service Planning and Delivery (Nigeria)
<b>IPS</b>	Institute of Parliamentary Studies (Uganda)
<b>LASEPA</b>	Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (Nigeria)
<b>LAWMA</b>	Lagos Waste Management Authority (Nigeria)
<b>MDAs</b>	ministries, departments and agencies
<b>MPs</b>	members of parliament
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>ODI</b>	Overseas Development Institute (UK)
<b>PSPPD</b>	Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development
<b>ToT</b>	training of trainers
<b>ULAP</b>	Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines
<b>UNAS</b>	Uganda National Academy of Sciences
<b>UNAS</b>	Uganda National Academy of Sciences
<b>ZeipNET</b>	Zimbabwe Evidence-Informed Policy Network



# WAKKA YUKO

# FOREWORD FROM THE VAKAYIKO DIRECTOR

**AT** INASP, we believe that research and knowledge have a crucial role to play in addressing global challenges and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To realize this potential, we work in partnership to strengthen the capacity of individuals and institutions to produce, share and use research and knowledge, in support of national development. It has therefore been an honour for me, as head of INASP's Evidence-Informed Policy Making (EIPM) team, to lead the DfID-funded VakaYiko Consortium to build capacity for using research evidence in policy making, particularly at a time where there is a worldwide revitalization of interest in how science, technology and research feed into policy.

Around the world, we are seeing increases in domestic and international investment, recognition in the SDGs of the importance of research and information for sustainable development at a global level, and governments increasingly valuing local research expertise to inform national development. In all four of VakaYiko's core countries (Ghana, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe) there was already some form of commitment to using evidence in policy making – supported, for example, in national development plans or high-level strategies. But a number of barriers were preventing these commitments from being realized. VakaYiko gave us the opportunity to tackle some of those barriers together with those who need to use evidence in their work.

INASP has been supporting the access, production and sharing of research for 25 years. The 'use' of evidence, which was the focus of our work in VakaYiko, is a vital component of the knowledge and research system with which INASP works, as demand for research affects the supply, and vice-versa. At INASP, we work systemically, and VakaYiko has allowed us to further explore the 'use' point of the cycle of knowledge into policy.

VakaYiko has worked in more than 10 countries, with many different public institutions – from local assemblies to ministries and parliaments. Over three years we have tested ideas, challenged our assumptions and built a better understanding of how evidence is or isn't used in policy and in practice, as well as how to support those involved in the process. Working as a consortium has been an incredibly rich experience, and has taught us that, while working collectively is sometimes hard, it is always worthwhile. This sharing of knowledge is invaluable, and the links we have made across countries have created a network of organizations who are passionate about this field of work.

A fundamental approach in INASP is to learn and reflect on our work, and in this report you will find many lessons from our experience as part of VakaYiko. I would like to highlight two here. First, while the skills and knowledge areas we targeted respond to gaps identified in the public institutions we worked with, these core concepts and skills could be introduced at different points in the system – for example, by strengthening higher-education quality. Such concepts and skills are useful for any

## INASP'S MISSION:

*To support individuals and institutions to produce, share and use research and knowledge, which can transform lives.*



job that relies on using information effectively, and especially for roles within policy and development. Secondly, although technical skills and knowledge are incredibly important, we found that the capacity to drive change within institutions requires other fundamental skills such as change management, leadership, influencing and communication. We therefore encourage everyone who works in this field to take the political economy of evidence use as seriously as the technical skills required to do it.

VakaYiko's approach has been participatory and collegiate, and, as such, there are many people who have contributed to the programme and its successes over the years.

First, I would like to thank the UK Department for International Development for giving us the opportunity to carry out this work. I want also to thank all the VakaYiko partners who led on the delivery of the work described in this report. Their knowledge and experience guided us in the design of a relevant and useful capacity development programme, and helped us navigate often challenging political contexts. They were invaluable in making the Consortium a collaborative space for peer learning and South–South collaboration.

We were also fortunate in working with open-minded government partners and participants who were willing to come on this journey with us, and test new approaches to the old problem of strengthening links between research and policy. We thank them for the opportunity to work with them and for sharing their knowledge with us.

The EIPM team, and the VakaYiko Consortium as a whole, benefited greatly from the expertise of our monitoring and evaluation (M&E), communications and pedagogy colleagues at INASP. I want to thank all those at INASP who have patiently and carefully helped us develop appropriate methodologies for adult learning; guided us in capturing lessons and incorporating them in our programme; and translated good results into stories that can be used by other practitioners and policymakers.

Last but not least, my thanks go to the EIPM team at INASP, who have done exceptional work supporting partners, linking people across countries, capturing lessons, and trying to be adaptive and responsive throughout these years. The VakaYiko Consortium wouldn't have made it to this point if it hadn't been for these individuals, and it has been a real pleasure to work with all of them.

Sincerely



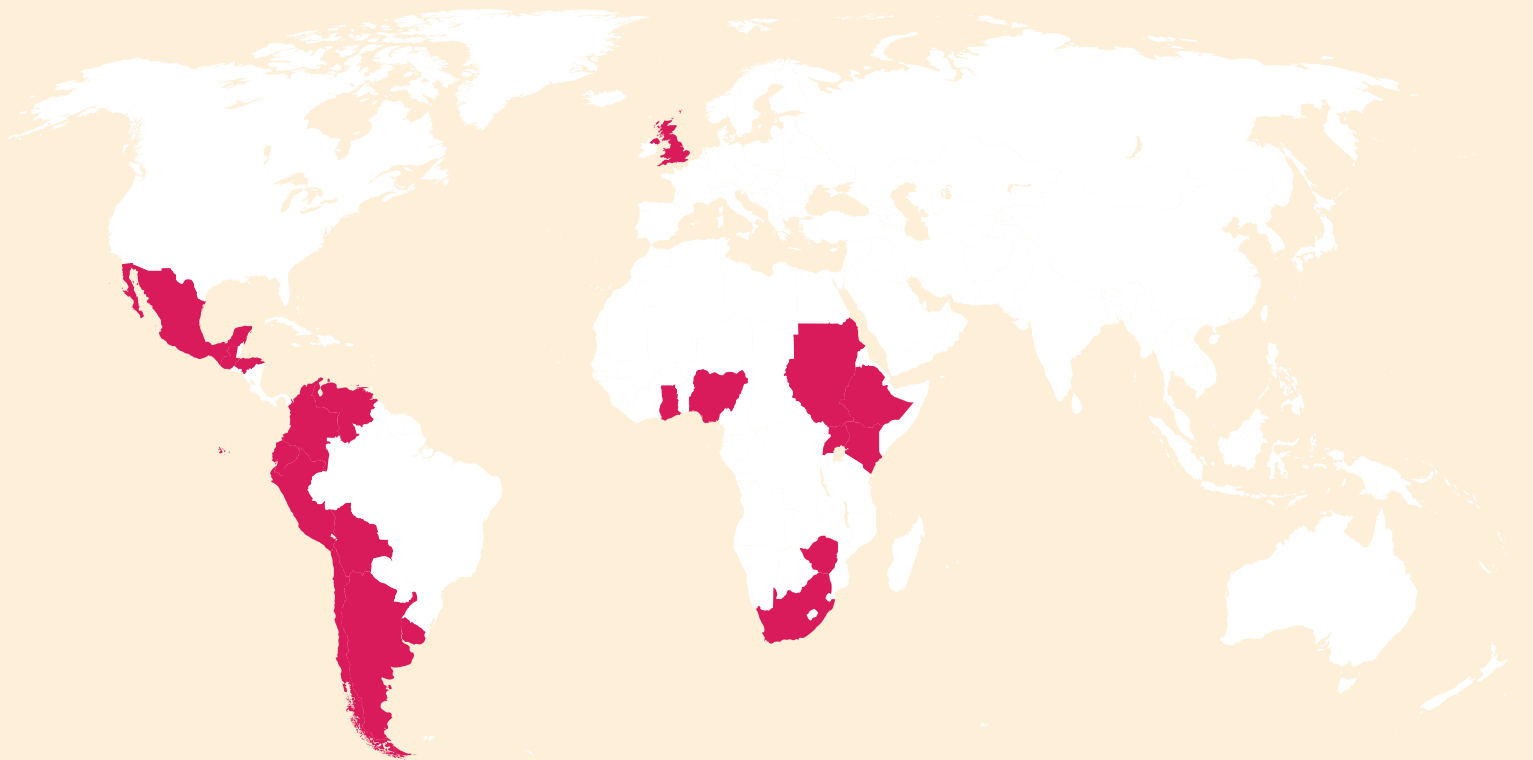
VakaYiko Director and Senior Programme Manager  
for Evidence-Informed Policy Making at INASP

# INTRODUCTION

This report reflects on different approaches to developing capacity for the use of evidence in policy making, as used by the VakaYiko programme in countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. It explores, in turn, different approaches at the individual, organizational and systems level, summarizing the range of methods used, and sharing examples from the programme and key lessons learned.

The division of experience into individual-, organizational- and system-level approaches is just one way of presenting the complexity of capacity development for evidence-informed policy. In reality, the levels overlap and intertwine. As the programme evolved so too did the partners' engagement with these different levels. New windows of opportunity and gateways for change emerged, sometimes meaning that interventions envisaged at one level ended up targeting another. In many cases, the programme combined approaches at different levels – either at the same time or in sequence – to maximize opportunities for change. Drawing on ITAD's model of 'viewing capacity development through four dimensions of change',<sup>1</sup> by the end of the programme, networks had also been incorporated as a cross-cutting theme. Overall, however, these three fundamental levels are a useful way to conceptualize VakaYiko's work, and the authors hope they will also guide readers.

This is a practitioner-focused, non-academic report, which aims to share learning with colleagues and partners in the sector. It explores specific interventions for capacity development through 'snapshots' of approaches and key learning at each of the levels. Coordinated by INASP but written with contributions from across the VakaYiko Consortium, it combines new material with excerpts from case studies that have been published throughout the programme. Inevitably, there are some valuable reflections and learnings that are beyond the scope of the report. It does not, for example, go into depth about the capacity gaps and needs identified in-country, nor does it review monitoring and evaluation approaches in detail, or reflect on EIPM in different political systems and contexts. As INASP develops this work in the future – both in partnership and individually – it is hoped that the programme may be able to share further learning on these and other themes.



1. [www.itad.com/viewing-capacity-development-through-four-dimensions-of-change](http://www.itad.com/viewing-capacity-development-through-four-dimensions-of-change).

# ABOUT VAKAYIKO

VakaYiko is a three-year programme working on capacity development for the use of evidence in policy making through a consortium of five organizations led by INASP's Evidence-Informed Policy Making (EIPM) team. Funded by DFID's Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) programme, VakaYiko initially comprised five 'core' partners working predominantly in three countries:

- INASP and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in the UK
- Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS) in Ghana
- Zimbabwe Evidence-Informed Policy Network (ZeipNET) in Zimbabwe
- Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in South Africa

Work in a fourth country, Uganda, began during the third year of the programme and was led by INASP.

In addition to its core partners, the VakaYiko Consortium included seven grantees in Argentina, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines and Sudan. These grantees were universities, think tanks and civil society organizations who received support from the Consortium to implement specific innovative approaches to strengthen capacity for evidence use in policy making.

## AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LEARNING

BCURE, and VakaYiko in particular, were very exploratory programmes. They aimed to test different approaches to capacity development, and learn from one another as they went along. INASP and its VakaYiko partners worked with all parts of the research-to-policy system, including think tanks, universities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), ministries, parliaments and training colleges. VakaYiko trialled a wide range of approaches, from training civil servants and parliamentary staff to coordinating department-wide change strategies and facilitating policy dialogues with civil society organizations.

Throughout, the programme aimed to take an open and thoughtful approach to allow Consortium partners to reflect together on what they were learning. This was guided by five broad, open-ended 'higher-level learning questions':

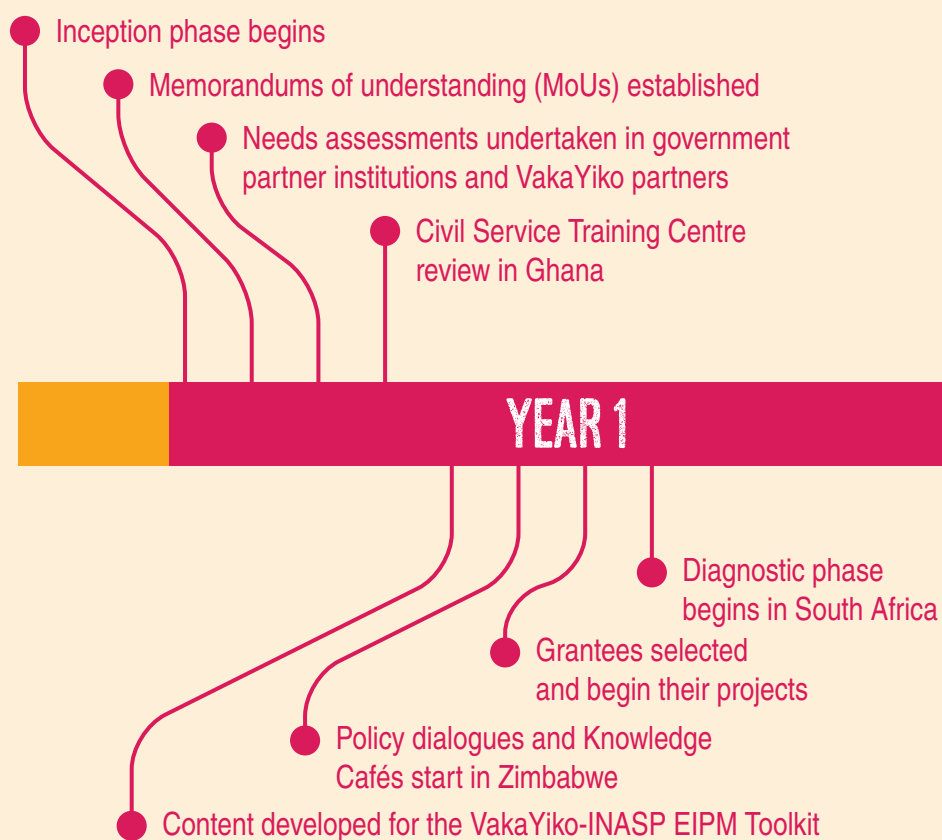
- a. Replicability.** What approaches can be adapted and transferred to other contexts? Under what conditions do these approaches work?
- b. Change management.** What are the challenges of working with and changing practices of already established working systems – such as civil service schools, ministries and parliaments?
- c. Sustainability.** What are effective approaches to sustainable capacity development for EIPM?
- d. Partnership.** How effective is our consortium model of partnership? What is the added value for each organization's work?

While this report is not explicitly structured around these higher-level learning questions, reflections along the key themes of replicability, change management, sustainability and partnership are woven throughout.

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICY'?

VakaYiko's understanding of evidence-informed policy takes a broad view of evidence. In this view, evidence for policy falls into four main categories: administrative data; citizen knowledge (such as that gained through stakeholder consultations); practice-informed knowledge (such as information from M&E systems); and research.<sup>2</sup> It does not prioritize one type of evidence over the other or promote one 'gold standard' of evidence – though of course, whatever type is used, all evidence should be collected according to the highest possible standards. Rather the programme emphasizes the importance of public institutions being able to identify, gather, synthesize and communicate multiple types of evidence to inform policy. It does, however, recognize that in the inherently political and highly complex nature of policy making, evidence is only one of many factors that affect policy decisions.

## THE VAKAYIKO TIMELINE



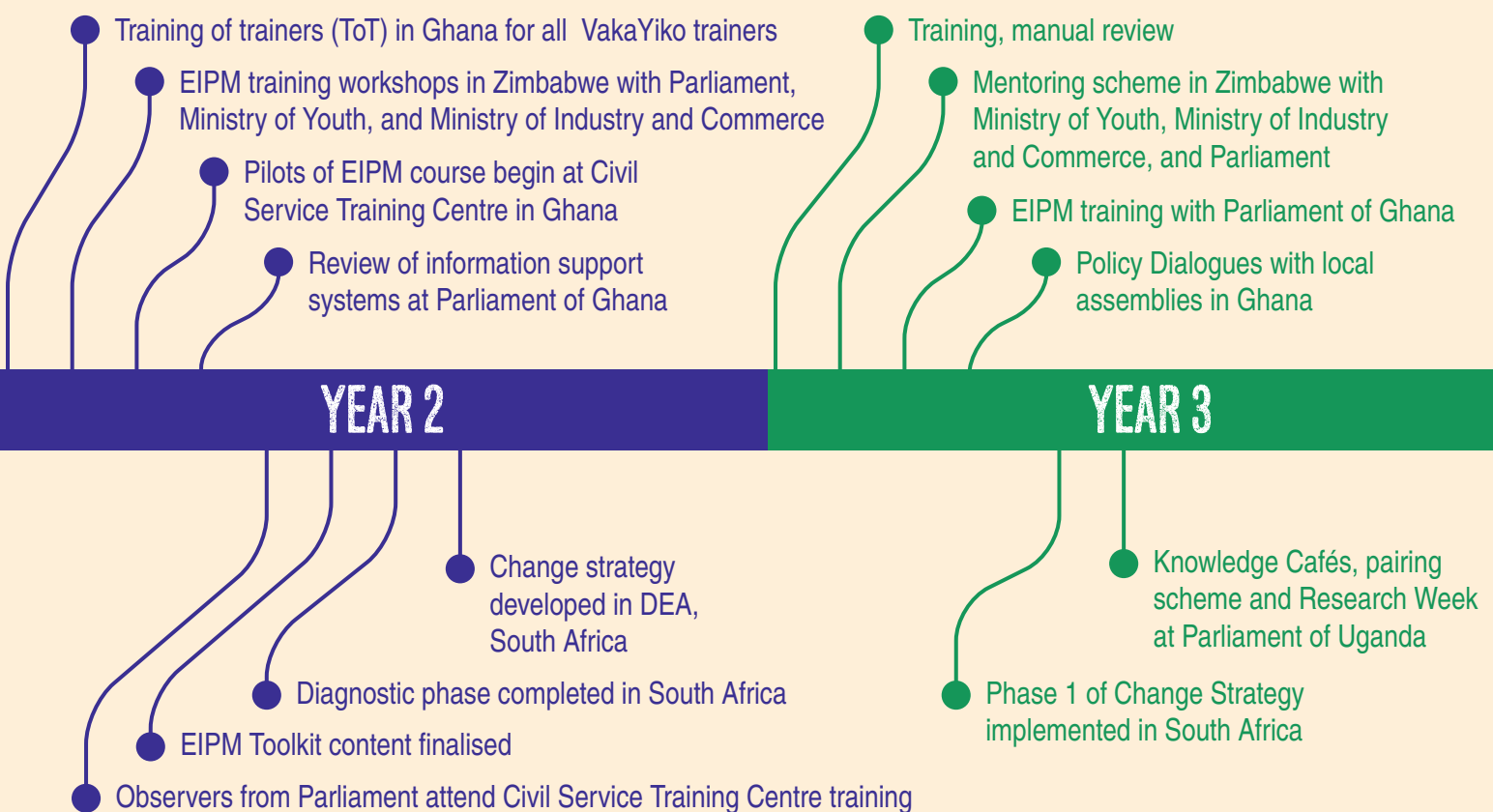
2. Jones, H., Jones, N., Shaxson, L. and Walker, D. (2013) Knowledge, Policy and Power in International Development. London: Overseas Development Institute.

# 'DEMAND-SIDE' APPROACH TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR EIPM

VakaYiko took a 'demand side' approach to developing capacity for evidence-informed policy making.<sup>3</sup> This means that instead of starting with how evidence producers could better target policymakers (the 'supply side'), it began with policymakers themselves. The programme looked to understand what support these policymakers needed to be able to systematically gather, appraise and communicate a range of types of evidence for policy making. It then explored how to stimulate demand or 'pull' for evidence from policymakers, rather than working to 'push' research and other forms of evidence to them from the supply side.<sup>4</sup> The programme didn't take a view on policy content, but instead tried to strengthen the information and evidence systems supporting the policy making process. It did so from a point of view that recognized and valued the complexity and politics of policy making, and the fact that evidence can rarely – if ever – be considered neutral within this.

A fundamental starting point for this approach involved breaking down who 'policymakers' really are. There are, of course, many different state actors involved in policy making – from the executive to the legislature, national level line ministries to regional and district level agencies. But it is not only top decision makers who contribute to 'making' policy; civil servants and parliamentary staff also gather and synthesize evidence to provide policy options and inform decision making. Within institutions, researchers and policy analysts do not perform this function independently, but through a complex support system within and outside their institutions that includes libraries, IT systems, budget offices, and other government agencies at central and local levels. Across its work, VakaYiko engaged with a wide variety of different actors involved in demanding and using evidence for policy, and tried to understand how their capacity needs differed.

This report first reflects approaches to needs assessments, the outcomes of which helped to inform the design of VakaYiko's individual, organizational and systems level approaches to capacity building.



3. This was in line with DFID's overall approach for the BCURE programme under which VakaYiko was funded.

4. For a more detailed explanation of this approach, see Newman et al., 2012.

# 1

## CONDUCTING NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Needs assessments helped to inform the design of the interventions outlined in this report, as well as the content of training materials. Some needs assessments were conducted in the early phases of the programme, so as to guide the overall approach within an institution; others were conducted during the implementation phase to inform specific activities.

VakaYiko partners took a range of approaches to conducting these needs assessments, including:

- Participatory problem tree analyses conducted in the three Zimbabwean partner institutions (Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and Parliament) to explore barriers to evidence use, the consequences of those blockages, and the needs to address them.
- Surveys were widely used – for example, in Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe, for self-assessment of capacity needs and to gauge attitudes to research and other forms of evidence.
- Focus groups were used to collaboratively prioritize and develop content for training courses in Ghana and Sudan and Latin America, and to explore wider capacity development needs in Uganda.
- Document reviews and interviews were used in Ghana, Uganda and South Africa to understand target institutions' operational and strategic frameworks.
- Stakeholder consultations and sensitisation meetings were also used in several countries to gauge broader interest and support for VakaYiko's work.
- Five studies of specific issues were drawn up in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Affairs in South Africa, to look in detail at issues the department considered important.

Although the programme was operating in a wide range of contexts, with many different partner organizations targeting different parts of the policy-making cycle, and with government departments with varying levels of capacity, a number of common issues and needs emerged. These have been extensively documented elsewhere and will be familiar to many. They included:

- Lack of coordination within and between different government agencies to support implementation of the evidence-informed approaches that are often promised in high-level national plans and strategies.
- Leadership, power and bureaucratic models that are resistant to change within individual departments, their institutions and the broader policy-making context.
- Few well-functioning governance structures with the time and expertise to focus specifically on evidence issues.
- Limited capacity for budget management for the collection, interpretation and gathering of evidence.
- The complexity and unpredictability of the policy process, resulting in short time-frames for gathering and synthesizing information, a wide range of types and topics of information required.
- Limited human, financial and information resources to support the use of evidence. Many research and information departments are underfunded and understaffed, working without reliable internet or other IT services such as reliable internal storage systems, and minimal to non-existent budget allocation for commissioning research.
- Skills and knowledge gaps among civil servants and parliamentary staff in a range of key areas including: how to access research; how to search databases effectively and assess quality and credibility of research and other types of evidence; and how to produce strong policy briefs, reports, infographics and oral presentations.
- Limited opportunities for meaningful engagement between local researchers, other information providers such as civil society, and policymakers.

## BOX 1 IN THEIR OWN WORDS: CIVIL SERVANTS AND PARLIAMENTARY STAFF ON BARRIERS TO EVIDENCE USE

"Most officers in the organization are not aware of the importance and need to use evidence to support decision making."

"Sometimes a policy is simply a pronouncement by the Executive."

"Most often when unplanned contingencies require data/information to support decisions, this is either not readily available or is scattered at unspecified locations. This makes it difficult and time consuming, often resulting in unproven conclusions and information gaps."

"We usually do not use research evidence when making decisions because research evidence is time consuming."

"The research evidence might require some changes in the organization and it is usually very difficult for any organization to easily accept change."

"Politicians always have their way."

Quotes taken from VakaYiko needs assessments

Not all of the needs and barriers identified could be addressed by the VakaYiko programme; some, such as the political nature of policy making or the comparative strength of the legislature to the executive, were beyond its scope. However, the needs assessments helped the VakaYiko partners better understand the context in which civil servants and parliamentary staff are working, and to consider how application of EIPM approaches could help to address their issues.

# 1.1 LESSONS LEARNED

**A desk review of an organization's operational and strategic plans and documents should ideally be combined with other tools** such as a survey, or, where possible, a face-to-face interactive session, such as an interview or focus group. This allows practitioners to build a comprehensive understanding of existing systems and structures so that interventions can be integrated within the department's own way of working rather than serving as an 'add-on'.

**Many of the most important needs with regards to developing capacity for evidence-informed policy making are informal and difficult to detect at the outset of a programme.** For example, these may be related to building strategic relationships, influencing and navigating complex hierarchical systems.

**Needs assessments should involve multiple stakeholders involved in the information system across an institution,** not only the target department. In many institutions where VakaYiko partners worked, there are several different departments influencing the use of evidence, including IT services, libraries, clerks, M&E and training units. Understanding the needs of the supervisors and heads of the departments being trained, and responding to these as far as possible, is also important for the success and sustainability of the programme. This can be complex where sub-national governments have delegated responsibility for collecting some evidence.

**Self-perceptions of needs and capacities as reported in surveys often conflicted with findings from other needs assessment tools.** Therefore, when assessing civil servants' needs in issues such as writing and research, a review of a department's existing products against a common framework or set of criteria can be useful. However, this can be time consuming and logistically difficult in situations where internal information storage systems are weak, or internal policy documents cannot be shared.

**Not all needs emerge at the same time.** In some cases, although a formal needs assessment was done prior to the intervention, new issues came to light during the implementation phase. Flexible funding structures are necessary to be able to respond to these. In cases where a payment-by-results system has already stipulated specific deliverables and timescales, it can be difficult to adapt to changing needs.



# 2

## APPROACHES TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

### 2.1 OVERVIEW

The VakaYiko programme began with the assumption that **civil servants and parliamentary staff have crucial roles to play in the systematic use of evidence in policy making.**

The programme used different approaches – including training, mentoring and coaching – to reach individuals from a wide range of public institutions, from the executive to parliament, ministries to local government and civil service colleges. Staff in these institutions need access to various forms of evidence as well as skills to gather, appraise, synthesise and communicate it effectively to decision makers.

But the programme also found that in many cases, **changes to attitudes and behaviours were just as, if not more, important.** Much of VakaYiko's work therefore sought to raise awareness about the value of research and the research process itself, highlighting the contribution research products can make alongside other types of evidence for decision making. The programme tried to stimulate and facilitate critical reflection and debate about the complex role of evidence in policy making processes in the countries in which it works.

**Most of VakaYiko's individual-level interventions involved training workshops delivered by local partners.** In some cases, such as in Ghana, VakaYiko trained staff from different government institutions together in EIPM. Other training workshops were sector-specific – for example, training Filipino district-level education officials in evidence for education policy, or Sudanese civil servants in evidence for gender policy. The programme also experimented with online training: VakaYiko grantee Politics & Ideas successfully piloted a course in evidence-informed policy for officials from 11 Latin American countries, which they went on to adapt and pilot in four African countries. In most cases, VakaYiko training workshops for civil servants were delivered by local research institutions and civil society organizations, with the exception of Ghana where the training was run by the national Civil Service Training Centre.

**To support and extend its training, VakaYiko partners used a variety of online and face-to-face mentoring, pairing and learning exchange schemes.** In Ethiopia, Jimma University used an online mentoring scheme for training participants. In Uganda, the National Academy of Sciences seconded participants to its key national advisory groups, while in Kenya, the African Centre for Technology Studies ran a successful job shadowing scheme. To ensure a holistic and sustainable approach, these individual-level interventions were often combined with capacity development activities at other levels to build strong organizational systems and a wider enabling environment for EIPM (see also Sections 2 and 3).

**INASP's in-house pedagogical adviser supported the development and implementation of the Consortium's approach to capacity development at individual level.** This included leading on the development of methodology and learning objectives for the EIPM Toolkit, running a ToT on learner-centred pedagogy with trainers who delivered the course in Ghana and Zimbabwe, and advising on strategies for other interventions such as mentoring and learning exchanges. As a result, VakaYiko's approach to developing capacity at individual level was strongly informed by key principles of adult learning.<sup>5</sup> These include:

- **Experience:** adults bring valuable experience and expertise, and benefit from capacity development approaches that actively use this experience.
- **Self-direction:** approaches that enable adults to take control over their own learning and make decisions about content and process are most effective.
- **Application:** adults learn best when there is immediate opportunity for practical application of new skills.
- **Different learning styles:** adults learn best when multiple means are used to represent the material, tapping into different learning preferences.
- **Personal benefit:** adults need to understand how the intervention will lead to professional or personal growth and open up opportunities.

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5. Adapted from Lela Vandenberg "Facilitating adult learning" available at: [http://od.msue.msu.edu/uploads/files/PD/Facilitating\\_Adult\\_Learning.pdf](http://od.msue.msu.edu/uploads/files/PD/Facilitating_Adult_Learning.pdf)



## FEATURED RESOURCE: EIPM TOOLKIT

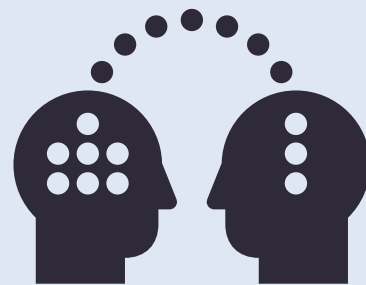
The EIPM Toolkit is an adaptable suite of resources created by VakaYiko to support civil servants and parliamentary staff to use evidence in policy making in developing countries. Available in full on the INASP website, it focuses on finding, evaluating and communicating evidence as well as developing practical implementation plans.

The Toolkit comprises four modules:

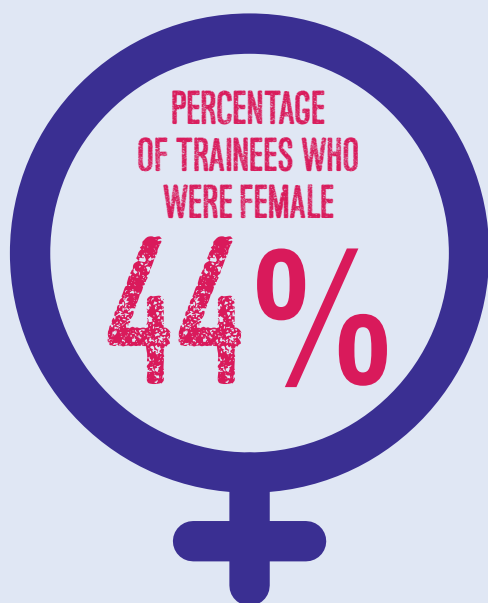


For each module, there is a **Trainer's Manual**, containing handouts, activities, presentations and reading for delivering EIPM training. This also includes an Action Planning template and a set of activities that can be used to develop individual or departmental action plans for EIPM. The corresponding **Practical Handbooks** for civil servants and parliamentary staff can be used as stand-alone resources or to accompany a training workshop. Also included are various **promotional resources** to raise awareness about evidence use in public institutions.

The Toolkit was primarily developed for use in VakaYiko's training workshops in Ghana and Zimbabwe, and was later adapted for use in training in Sudan and Uganda.



**Nº OF COUNTRIES TRAINING WAS HELD IN** **8**



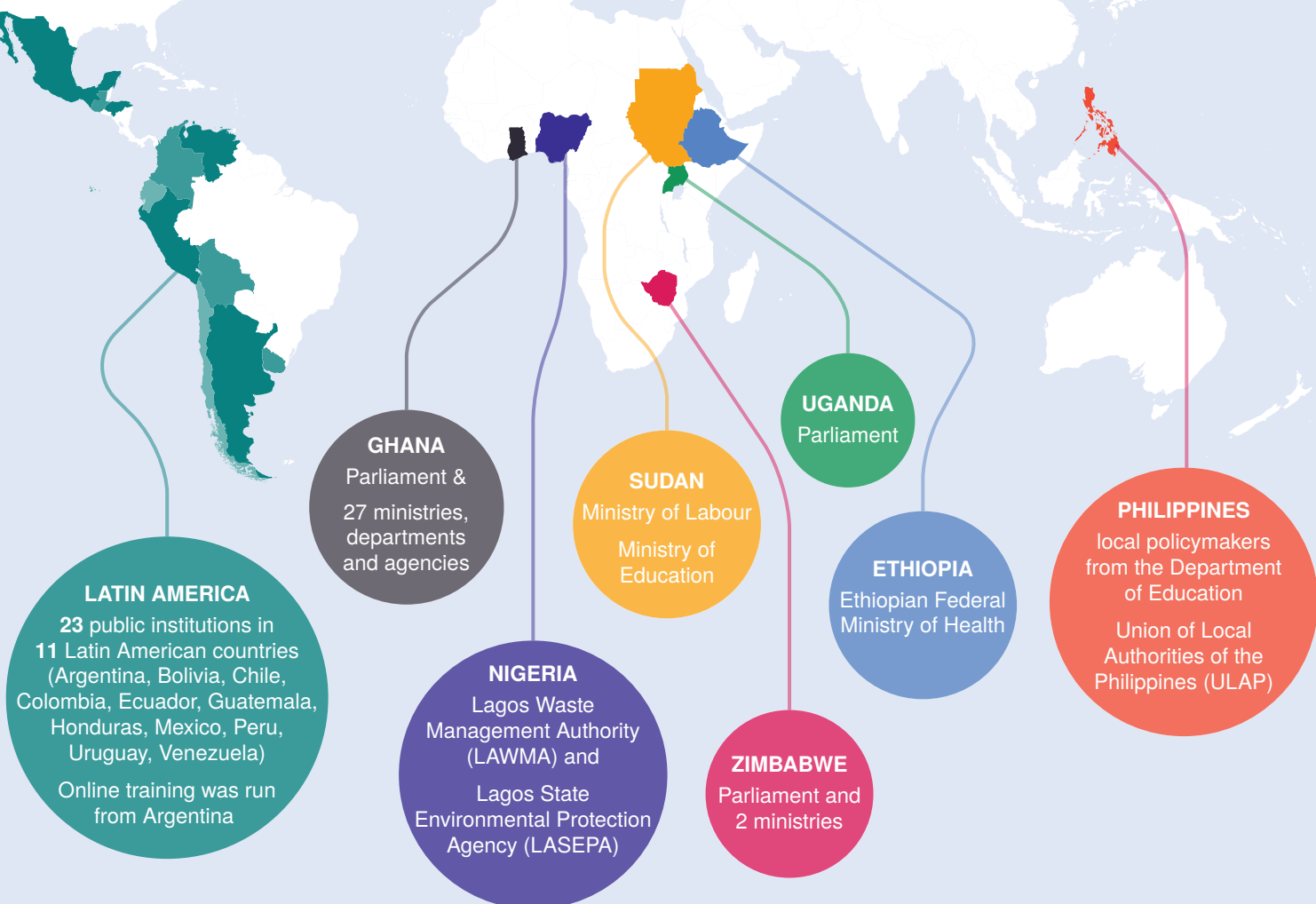
**JOB ROLES OF PEOPLE WHO WERE TRAINED:**

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DIRECTOR, CLERK, ADMINISTRATOR, ADVISOR, ASSESSOR, PLANNING OFFICER, HEAD OF UNIT, MANAGER, PROGRAMME OFFICER, RESEARCH OFFICER, RECORDS OFFICER, AUDITOR, AUTHOR, BUSINESS SUPPORT HEAD, CHAIRMAN, CHIEF ECONOMIST, CIVIL SERVANT, DATA OFFICER, COMMERCIAL OFFICER, CONSULTANT, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, DEAN OF FACULTY, DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR, GENDER OFFICER, IMMIGRATION OFFICER, DIRECTOR, JOURNALIST, KNOWLEDGE MANAGER, LECTURER, LIBRARIAN, LIVELIHOOD AND RESILIENCE OFFICER, SCIENTIFIC OFFICER, TRAINING OFFICER, PROJECT ENGINEER, POLICY AND RESEARCH OFFICER, MONITORING AND EVALUATION SPECIALIST, TECHNICAL ASSISTANT, PROGRAMMES AND ADVOCACY OFFICER, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

# TRAINING CONTENT

- INTRODUCTION TO EIPM
- SEARCH STRATEGY
- ASSESSING EVIDENCE
- RESEARCH IN GENDER
- GENDER ANALYSIS TO INFORM POLICY MAKING
- DATA COLLECTION IN THE FIELD
- ACCESS TO RESEARCH
- APPRAISING EVIDENCE
- EVIDENCE IN EDUCATION
- PRINCIPLES OF DATA MANAGEMENT
- PUBLIC POLICY PROCESSES
- TYPES OF RESEARCH
- TYPES OF POLICYMAKERS
- COMMUNICATING EVIDENCE

# INSTITUTIONS TRAINED



## 2.2 EMBEDDING EIPM CONTENT IN CIVIL SERVICE TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Based on contributions from Kirchuffs Atengble, GINKS

### PILOTING EIPM TRAINING WITH THE CSTC IN GHANA

In Ghana, the VakaYiko Consortium partnered with an established capacity-development institution for civil servants, the Civil Service Training Centre (CSTC). The programme lead in Ghana, GINKS, worked directly with CSTC as a strategic partner to develop and deliver a series of pilot EIPM courses at the centre.

The CSTC runs civil and public service training to improve the functional effectiveness and efficiency of civil and public servants, both in Ghana and throughout the West African region, through adult learning approaches and activities. It explores new approaches to improve public-sector capacity to deliver sustainable results, facilitates peer learning by identifying and sharing best practices, and promotes knowledge transfer. CSTC has 12 full time trainers, and a pool of 55 adjunct trainers, who are serving personnel of the civil service. (CSTC website, n.d.)

GINKS used an existing informal relationship with the Principal of the CSTC to explore potential for collaboration. Having expressed interest in the idea and attended an initial planning meeting with GINKS, the CSTC Principal took the plans to the Office of the Head of Civil Service (OHCS). The initiative was welcomed by the Head of Civil Service, who remained a vocal and committed champion of VakaYiko's work in Ghana for the remainder of the project. This high-level buy-in was critical to the successes of the project.

Early on, GINKS reviewed courses offered by CSTC, aiming to identify those that looked at the topic of evidence use and to then explore opportunities to integrate EIPM content into the existing curriculum.<sup>7</sup> Finding that CSTC had no specific course on evidence-informed policy making nor any content on evidence in other courses, project partners mutually agreed to work towards embedding an EIPM course at the centre, with the long term goal of it becoming a prescribed course, the undertaking of which would be a requirement for promotion of all categories and levels of staff in the civil service (this is known as a 'scheme of service' course).

#### PARTNER PROFILE

#### GINKS

GINKS is an NGO operating as a network that seeks to promote knowledge sharing within Ghanaian society. Since 2003 the network has implemented projects and programmes within its core mandates of gender, youth, education, and health. The organization currently operates within the fields of evidence-informed policy making and information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D).

***“This [training] is very important as we’ve had challenges with our policy processes [and] cabinet memos have not been properly written in some instances.... a technocratic committee of cabinet has been launched... to do some housecleaning or gatekeeping work before [policy documents] go to the cabinet.”***

Ghana's Head of Civil Service, Nana Kwesi Agyekum Dwamena, addresses participants at the launch of the VakaYiko Evidence-Informed Policy Making course at the Civil Service Training Centre, Accra, April 2015

7. This CSTC Review is available on the INASP website: [www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/140](http://www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/140)

## COLLABORATIVE PLANNING AND PILOTING OF THE EIPM COURSE

With high-level buy-in secured and the organizational review complete, the VakaYiko team began preparing CSTC for delivery of the EIPM course pilots. As partners with a shared interest in adult learning methodology, GINKS and CSTC organized a training of trainers (ToT) workshop, delivered by INASP's in-house pedagogical adviser, on learner-centred training approaches.

Ahead of the first training, CSTC organized a peer review – a standard activity during which its trainers work together to practise the delivery of new content and to decide who will deliver which session. A core group of five trainers was selected to deliver the EIPM pilots, led by two adjunct trainers. Permanent trainers acted as co-facilitators, which allowed them to build their confidence in the material, with the aim of ensuring that they would be able to take over delivery of the course once the programme had ended.

***“This kind of course will be crucial for our staff at the district and regional levels if the Ministry’s proposed labour market information system is to be well implemented at that level.”***

George Amoah, Assistant Director, Research Statistics and Information Management Directorate, Ghana Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, adjunct trainer on the VakaYiko CSTC EIPM course

***“The training was very informative and a deviation from the normal training programmes on policy making. It placed more emphasis on the processes of collecting the right evidence to inform policy. The approach was very practical which was commendable.”***

Report on behalf of participants at CSTC training, 2015

Course content was also developed collaboratively: VakaYiko partners worked on the core framework of the Toolkit and shared this with CSTC trainers via a collaborative online group for their feedback before the first training. This process of feedback and revision of the Toolkit continued throughout the pilots during Year 2 of the programme, and valuable feedback from each pilot at CSTC (as well as those pilots held simultaneously in Zimbabwe) informed the design and revision of the course and related materials before the next pilot. This was finalized at the end of Year 2 via a content validation meeting held at CSTC.

In response to demand from CSTC, GINKS increased the number of planned 10-day pilots from two to four. During years 2 and 3 of the programme, a total of 93 Civil Servants from Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation and Research, Statistics and Information Management Directorates in 27 ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) were trained in all four modules of the EIPM Toolkit – an introduction to evidence-informed policy, search strategies, assessing evidence and communicating evidence.

The workshops were led by adjunct trainers from CSTC, which provided a great opportunity for participants to benefit from their direct experience in Ghanaian policy discussions. VakaYiko engaged external speakers and facilitators from academia and industry, sometimes as trainers of sessions that required more in-depth knowledge (to stimulate knowledge transfer to CSTC trainers) and, at other times, as guest speakers to interact with participants. These external speakers enhanced the credibility of the programme to such an extent that CSTC is considering the continuation of such engagements.

The collaborative approach ran throughout the project, with CSTC leading on interactions with various elements of the civil service through the OHCS, and GINKS liaising with its VakaYiko partners to monitor progress, evaluate results and learnings, and communicate to external stakeholders. This collaborative approach was hugely beneficial to project implementation and buy-in, and has also meant that CSTC is in a good position to continue the trainings going forward.

## MAKING CHANGE SUSTAINABLE

Each of the training participants developed an action plan to support better use of evidence in their workplaces, and which were followed up by GINKS and CSTC after three months. They found that participants had implemented a range of new activities to improve the accessibility, availability and use of information/evidence in their work. Some participants developed basic templates for gathering information in their organizations; others committed to restructuring their information storage and management systems, or to improving information flows among partner organizations.

VakaYiko is confident that the CSTC has the capacity to sustainably deliver the new EIPM content developed. The Centre has now run a ToT workshop for 20 participants from the pilots who wanted to become adjunct trainers for CSTC in EIPM, thereby widening its pool of trainers who are equipped to train on EIPM. CSTC is also in discussion with the Cabinet Secretariat about the delivery of a series of training activities on EIPM to high-level officers, and is working to embed content from the EIPM pilots into its curriculum as a scheme of service course, in its complete form, and or as constituent parts of other existing scheme of service courses.

GINKS and VakaYiko benefited from a supportive environment within the civil service for EIPM. High-level buy-in from the Head of Civil Service was also critical to the success and momentum of the partnership between GINKS and CSTC. The attendance of the Head of Civil Service in person at the launch of the course, and his continued interest in the progress of the programme was fundamental. CSTC's existing structures for knowledge transfer were also valuable to the project. Its adjunct trainer system enabled the Consortium to tap in to momentum and expertise on evidence and policy in the Ghanaian Civil Service, ensuring that the course content and delivery were practical and relevant. VakaYiko also learned from CSTC's experience with Action Plans, with CSTC's template becoming part of the final VakaYiko EIPM Toolkit.

***“I proposed the use of a client request form; this will enable us know what a client actually needs so we can provide the right information and save time.”***

Course participant, CSTC training 2015

However, there were challenges and lessons learned. For instance, trainers needed more preparation in the content of the Toolkit. The ToT offered by VakaYiko focused on pedagogical skills rather than content, which proved challenging in implementation particularly for the permanent trainers of CSTC who were unfamiliar with many of the key concepts. This meant that the intended co-creation of content was not as in-depth as had been hoped, and many of the most valuable suggestions came during the course of the pilots when trainers were feeling more familiar with the content.

And, while the project had secured high-level buy-in, the follow-up impact assessment from the first pilot revealed that many participants did not have the required support from their organizations to implement their changes because their managers had limited knowledge of the course. The implementation team therefore agreed to include directors and other senior officers (in addition to lower- and middle-level staff) in the next pilots of the course. Trainers welcomed the new additions, and took advantage of the experience contributed by the senior officers in the following pilots.

***“The Ministry had an existing model used in the determination of transport fares. This was based on a gross assumptions and percentages allocated to different components of the model. The course highlighted the need for some basic assumptions under the model to be supported with facts and figures. This resulted in some surveys being conducted to update variables in the model. It also resulted in some stakeholder consultations to gain their support for the model.”***

CSTC EIPM course participant, 2015



## BOX 2 VAKAYIKO'S INDIVIDUAL LEVEL M&E

Core VakaYiko partners assessed training effectiveness on the basis of the Kirkpatrick Model of Training Evaluation.<sup>8</sup> This model consists of the four different levels: reactions; learning; transfer/behaviour change; and impact, with each level being considered a necessary prerequisite in order to reach the next one.

- 1 Reaction.** What learners thought and felt about the training and about their learning (e.g. learner was keen to acquire new research writing skills and liked the training).
- 2 Learning.** The increase in knowledge or capacity as a result of the training (e.g. learner knows how to structure a policy brief).
- 3 Transfer/ behaviour change.** The degree or extent of improvement in behaviour and capability and implementation (e.g. learner uses their new skills in daily practice).
- 4 Impact.** The effects on the governmental institution, organization or networks resulting from the actions of the learner (e.g. initiation of organizational processes or policies are informed by evidence).

Due to time and feasibility constraints, it was decided that the programme would evaluate the training up to the transfer/behaviour change level. For this the programme employed feedback questionnaires (reaction), pre and post training tests (learning), and follow-up surveys with participants (behaviour change).

The content of this and other M&E boxes was contributed by Jan Liebnitzky, INASP M&E Officer.

## LEVERAGING THE CONVENING POWER OF THE PSSDC IN NIGERIA

Contributed by Faaria Hussain, Programme Assistant, INASP<sup>9</sup>

In Nigeria, the Improving Information Literacy for Urban Service Planning and Delivery (INFO-LIT) project, devised by Lagos-based public policy think tank CPPA, aimed to strengthen the understanding and use of evidence by local government in urban areas of Nigeria for more consistent and cost-effective public services. INFO-LIT aimed specifically to develop the capacity of staff in the state's Health Service Commission, Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) and the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA) to collect and use data.

To ensure training was useful and therefore sustainable, it was set within local contexts through the use of relevant examples and case studies. INFO-LIT held three training sessions over two days for 59 participants. Content was tailored to the different day-to-day responsibilities of participating staff, broadly grouped into three categories: data collection in the field, analysis and decision making. For the last session of the

second day, participants were brought together to foster inter-agency collaboration.

Senior policymakers were initially reluctant to engage with the project. To reach these, INFO-LIT enlisted the support of the Public Service Staff Development Centre (PSSDC) a state training and capacity-building agency. The project was able to benefit from the convening power of the PSSDC to secure buy-in from senior officials in target audiences. Their involvement in the design and delivery of the training helped to make sure that the content was received positively by participants.

After the workshop, PSSDC management decided to incorporate the INFO-LIT training modules into its own curriculum for local governments and other service agencies. This was a huge success for the project and a positive sign for information literacy going forward.

To read the full case study see the INASP website: [www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/236](http://www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/236).

8. Kirkpatrick (1979) Techniques for evaluating training programs. *Training and development journal*: 178-192.

9. All summaries of grants case studies contributed by Faaria Hussain.

## 2.3 FACE-TO-FACE TRAINING IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS / ADAPTING TRAINING TO DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

### A TARGETED APPROACH TO EIPM TRAINING IN ZIMBABWE

In Zimbabwe, VakaYiko partners also delivered the EIPM Toolkit training, but took a different approach from that which had been used during the training in Ghana. Rather than working through a civil service college to train individuals from many different institutions, ZeipNET formed direct partnerships with three public institutions – the Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and the Parliament of Zimbabwe – and trained each institution's whole research team in a series of workshops. Unlike in Ghana where the training was delivered in a single 10-day block, in Zimbabwe ZeipNET delivered each of the Toolkit's four modules as a two-day workshop, over a period of eight months.

The training was combined with other VakaYiko interventions in the same departments: a series of policy dialogues bringing together researchers and policymakers to discuss specific policy topics, and a follow-up mentoring programme to support trainees on the action plans they developed after the training to implement change in their department. ZeipNET's targeted approach, which focused on just three institutions, allowed for focused, holistic support; in Ghana, where the first CTSC training involved staff from 18 MDAs, this would not have been possible.

More on ZeipNET's work in Zimbabwe can be found in **sections 3 and 4** of this report.

### BRINGING TOGETHER SERVICE PROVIDERS AND POLICYMAKERS IN ETHIOPIA

VakaYiko grantee Jimma University developed and ran a training 'Building research evidence utilization capacity of health planners and policymakers' with the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health. The programme sought to strengthen the capacity of Ethiopian health professionals and decision makers to access, critically appraise and use evidence in policy making. Held in September 2015 in Addis Ababa, the three part, five-day training was attended by 21 participants from 11 departments in the Ministry. More than three quarters of these were decision makers in their offices and the rest were service providers.

### COMBINING TRAINING AND MENTORING FOR EVIDENCE DEMAND IN THE PHILIPPINES

Ateneo de Manila University received a grant from VakaYiko to develop a capacity development programme that addresses gaps in education reform in the Philippines. This was conducted in two phases: phase one focused on training and phase two on mentoring (Section 2.5). The aim was to introduce the use of evidence in informing policy making but also, to increase the demand for accessibility of data and information across agencies of government, especially between national and local governments. The programme addressed the need for the executive and legislative bodies at the local level to learn together and understand what this data means and how it can be used from a policy perspective.

The training consisted of four modules: Towards an Evidence Informed Policy making Process; Useful Evidence for Education; Data Management: Collecting, Storing and Analyzing Data for Policy Work; and Planning for Policy: Weighing Decisions and Alternatives.

Participants were a combination of elected officials and civil servants involved in executive and legislative work, particularly within local education.

To read the full case study by Anne Candelaria see the INASP website: [www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/200](http://www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/200).

## USING LIVE EXAMPLES AND DISCUSSION TO CHALLENGE STATUS QUO IN SUDAN

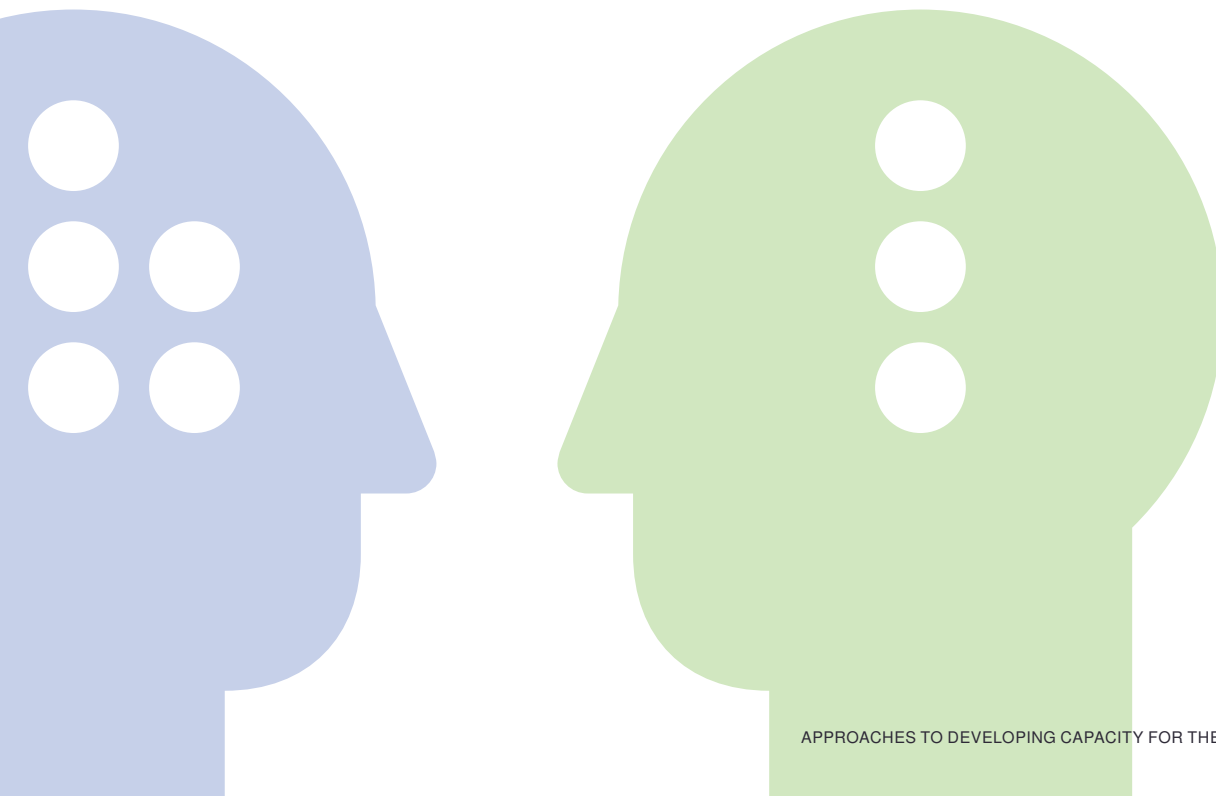
VakaYiko awarded a grant to the Gender Centre for Research and Training (GCRT) for a project aimed at developing the capacity of policymakers in the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education to find, critically assess, and use data and research evidence in policy making. The training workshops were combined with a public conference.

Four modules were prepared for the training, using focus group discussions to adapt parts of INASP's EIPM Toolkit to local needs and context. Gender aspects, including gender mainstreaming, were developed and added to the materials in order to develop the capacity-development sessions.

30 mid-level staff took part in a four-day training course for each ministry. More than 70% of the participants were female. Topics covered included an introduction to evidence-informed policy making, research strategies, assessing evidence and gender analysis to inform policy making.

The political and social nature of gender training raised challenges at individual and institutional levels. Challenges at the institutional levels included a lack of political will to address gender issues, the dominance of one party ideology and lack of gender units to provide training on gender issues including data collection and gender analysis. Challenges at the individual levels included misconception of gender concepts (some participants viewed gender as a Western concept), norms, and traditions. Case studies, examples, questions and answers presented at the sessions (by both the trainers and participants), acted as means to challenge some of the misconceptions and to link gender concepts with local needs and reality.

After completion of the training, participants and the heads of the Ministries requested that the GCRT deliver further training. It was also recommended that the GCRT replicate the EIPM training to policymakers working in other regions outside of Khartoum where resources are more constrained. The GCRT is considering these requests as well as other opportunities to build on the work delivered as part of this project.



## 2.4 TAKING LEARNING ONLINE

### INSIGHTS FROM POLITICS & IDEAS

Based on its experience in virtual learning, Politics and Ideas (P&I) decided to create an online course focused, not only on supporting the development of technical ability with concrete tools and methods, but also on how to approach common challenges that arise when promoting the use of evidence, taking the political economy in these processes into account.

#### CO-CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE

Building a relevant and useful curriculum for the course was an important challenge. P&I deployed a set of strategies that allowed them to unravel policymakers' needs and experiences. First, P&I turned to specialized literature. Secondly, it launched a brief questionnaire inviting policymakers to contribute ideas on what they would like to see addressed in this type of course. It also interviewed a range of public officials in several countries to understand how they are currently using evidence. Finally, P&I created a strategic group made up of eight former or current senior policymakers with significant academic or research background from different Latin American countries. This group contributed to the design and review of the curriculum, and some later shared their experience and reflections in our webinars.

The other side of the co-construction of knowledge involved the contributions made by participants across the seven weeks of the course. Their continuous engagement in relevant discussions, collective spirit of thinking and their concrete experiences expanded and refined the content of P&I's capacity-building activities, making the course more effective and attractive to new groups of policymakers in Africa.

#### SELECTING PARTICIPANTS

P&I received more than 350 applications for the course, from most of the countries in Latin America and were then faced with the challenge of selecting only 25 of them to fill the available spots. P&I used a mix of criteria such as geographic diversity, experience in the use of research/evidence in their working environments, needs and motivations to learn and use that knowledge within their organizations, and individual and organizational commitment to share knowledge with their peers. The result was a very rich and heterogeneous group from Guatemala to Argentina, working at the national, subnational and local levels.

#### PARTNER PROFILE

##### POLITICS & IDEAS

Politics & Ideas (P&I) is a think net and VakaYiko grantee. It is a joint initiative of researchers and practitioners to co-produce and share innovative and relevant knowledge linking ideas and politics in developing and emerging economies. For more information, see [www.politicsandideas.org](http://www.politicsandideas.org)

***“Adaptive leadership approaches help us consider how to promote a culture that uses evidence in organizational contexts characterized by relationships of power.”***

Politics & Ideas




## ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE LEARNING

One advantage of using an online course in comparison to a face-to-face workshop (although ideally P&I would have loved to combine both approaches) is that participants have a longer time to digest content and link it to their ongoing work. The course took place over seven weeks so P&I was able to space out the content, addressing two or three big issues per week.

Online tools also allow the promotion of horizontal learning. Online exchange provides the feeling of a network, where many can bring both ideas and problems and where the experiences of one can shed light on the questions of another. Throughout the course, participants advised their colleagues on how to approach different opportunities and/or threats and how to manage strengths and weaknesses related to the use of knowledge. Several participants offered their experience to help course colleagues to develop new information systems, set up monitoring and evaluation processes or shape innovative formats for communication with their authorities or the citizenship. This solidarity was a key factor for the success of the course.

## LOOKING AHEAD



Many participants have already started to apply concrete tools in their daily practice. For example, some have begun developing more innovative presentations of evidence for decision makers; others have been developing set criteria to consider when doing policy recommendations, both internally and when dealing with external evaluators. Several participants have also put in requests to their authorities to raise the importance of the use of knowledge in their areas. In this sense, the course sought to encourage participants to become leaders of change within their agencies and work spaces. One way to address this could be to support these efforts with a mid-term mentoring approach, underpinning policymakers' concrete actions to address opportunities and challenges when promoting the use of evidence in their organizations.

In the final year of the VakaYiko programme, based on the positive outputs and outcomes of the course, Politics & Ideas partnered with Kenyan think tank AfIDEP to pilot it a second time in four African countries: Uganda, Ghana, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The second round of the course was informed by the learning gained during the first round in terms of methodology and relevant content. It also incorporated the experiences of former participants.

To read the full case study by Vanesa Weyrauch and Leandro Echt see the INASP website: [www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/198](http://www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/198).

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

interview with **Thywill Eyra Kpe**

This excerpt is based on interview with Emily Hayter, EIPM Programme Manager, INASP, in Cape Coast, Ghana, 24 July 2016.

At the time of her participation in the first CSTC course in April 2015, Thywill was posted in Volta Region in Ghana. She has since moved to Central Region as the Regional Director for the Department of Gender, under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

**My role is to** coordinate and promote gender equality in the region by engaging stakeholders, advocating with other MDAs (Ministries, Departments and Agencies), and also dealing with women's groups in various communities as well as men's groups. I collect information, which I pass on to my head office ...when there is the need for policy information in a specific area, this feeds into that policy demand. Aside from that, as a Regional Director you also identify challenges in your region and address them locally. Once you address them, you can also feed the head office with results of what you are doing.

For the purpose of mainstreaming we also have gender desk officers at the various district assemblies who are supposed to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into the development process. I liaise with them and provide them with technical backstopping.

**The type of evidence I use** depends on the kind of activity we are doing. Sometimes we use evidence from development partners; sometimes we rely on grey evidence, evidence from other MDAs as well as our own ministry. Sometimes we use evidence from stakeholder engagement; we engage communities a lot. Whatever information we get from these communities becomes a basis for our work.

Then also, the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DoVVSU) – I work with their data a lot. Sometimes when you have different sources of information they get scattered. So any issue of gender-based violence (GBV) that comes to my office, I keep a record of it but I refer it to DoVVSU so that we have a comprehensive picture of sexual and gender-based violence in the region.

When you are looking for local content evidence, it is difficult. So sometimes you need to fall on the raw data from the MDAs to be able to do your work because that is the only thing you can get ... the only impact you can make is to [request] that it should be gender disaggregated. Some of [the MDAs] still produce evidence without properly disaggregating it.

**My involvement with VakaYiko** has helped me to start up at this [regional] level. When I came [to the Central Region in 2015], there was very little to rely on as far as evidence was concerned.

For example, there was a high rate of teenage pregnancy. I was new in the Central Region and there was very little background information. Following on from the knowledge that I had gained [in the course], I began to create relationships with the MDAs to gather information on the rates of the issue, what kinds of interventions were available ... and I began to engage stakeholders. I held two policy dialogues to get information from traditional leaders and heads of schools. Also I went on to get some information from the girls themselves. Then after that I went on to get information from the Ghana Health Service.

To get more information, I went online. My experience [in the course] using search engines, sifting information and finding the right information meant I was able to find exactly what I was looking for.

When I go online I realize there is so much information. Previously, I would have just used any of them without verifying the source. But now I'm more sensitive to the source—how authentic is it? Is it something credible I can use to inform what I'm doing? Also is it something that can make the needed impact that I want?

Aside from that, I think it has also helped with my communication how to reach particular target groups. If, for example, I'm meeting with queen mothers, what information will I need that will make the needed impact? If I'm meeting schoolchildren, what information will I need? I'm able to manage information better now than previously.

**Having participated in both the EIPM workshops at Civil Service Training Centre (CSTC) and also the Politics & Ideas online EIPM course, I would say that** there is nothing like sharing ideas face-to-face, it's incomparable. In the face-to-face, everybody is able to bring something on board ... you can hear people share their experience, share their position.

What I also appreciated about the CSTC training was the hands-on practicals that we did, for example how to use search engines, communication and presentation skills. The practical aspect added a lot of substance to what we learned.

I find that you are also able to create relationships that are long lasting, which is another touch to the face-to-face training that was useful for me ... [after the CSTC training] we created relationships across MDAs. We have a WhatsApp platform where we share ideas on policy and interact with each other.

For convenience, the online training is good. I [still] had to travel but I was still able to participate online in the discussions. If there is anything that can help women get knowledge, it's online training. I am a family woman—I know how difficult it is. For women who are busy, combining work, family, and training, online is best.

In the online course you are also able to interact with the facilitators, they have time for you, you send them emails and they try to respond to each and every person's comments, make corrections, ask for discussions on particular issues that are challenging. That was an area I found very good.

**It's important for the Civil Service Training Centre to have EIPM content as part of its curriculum** because, when it comes to policy, it is the civil servants who do all the work, the information gathering. If it were in my power, I would say that every single civil servant needs to go through this course. No matter what unit you are working in, at some point you use information that informs policy, and if every civil servant is able to have some knowledge on EIPM I believe it will positively impact on the work we do, so that whatever policy comes out reflects the needs of the people and addresses those needs.

## 2.5 SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS TO ACHIEVE CHANGE THROUGH MENTORING, PAIRING AND LEARNING EXCHANGES

VakaYiko partners and grantees have tested a number of one-on-one, tailored approaches to building individuals' skills and knowledge through mentoring, pairing and learning exchange schemes. These have, in many cases, been used in combination with other interventions in order to support individuals to practically apply new skills and ideas in the workplace. Such approaches are an opportunity to put into practice the key adult learning principles that underpin the Consortium's approach – emphasizing self-directed learning, valuing the professional expertise that adults bring, and enabling practical application of skills to real-life work situations. However, such interventions can also be challenging to implement as they require careful management of expectations and intensive tailored support, and depend to a large extent on the motivation and drive of the participants.

### JOB-SHADOWING WITH RESEARCHERS AND POLICYMAKERS IN KENYA

In Kenya, VakaYiko grantee the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) developed a job-shadowing scheme, in parallel to its series of roundtables (see Section 3), which paired two ACTS scientists with two policymakers.

The ACTS scientists structured their plans fit within the legislative cycle, attending specific sessions where MPs were debating climate change or other relevant issues. The Policy Fellows and Scientists met regularly and participated in the Kenya Climate Change Science, Technology and Policy Roundtables, where they shared their knowledge and ideas and, most importantly, heard first-hand from different stakeholders on what areas should be prioritized. The researchers worked with the policymakers as they reviewed and contributed to the second reading of the bill, and also co-produced two papers on evidence-informed policy making in climate legislation and policy in Kenya. As a think tank, ACTS also had access to various resources related to climate science, and the policymakers were able to access these resources as well as ACTS' research facilities and support services for the duration of the scheme.

ACTS observed that discussions between the researchers and policymakers has resulted in better understanding of how, for instance, evidence can be effectively packaged for different types of stakeholders (e.g. brief summaries for lawmakers and technical reports and data for ministries and government departments as well as counties to act upon). The job shadowing process when combined with the roundtables provided an opportunity for the scientists and policymakers to apply the knowledge gained in the roundtables and elsewhere as they work on climate change policies. At the core of the design was the scheme's ability to transmit knowledge and expertise between the scientists and policymakers, building trust for long-term collaboration.

The full case study, by Winnie Asiti and Cosmas Ochieng, is available at [www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/199](http://www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/199).

### FACILITATING LEARNING EXCHANGES IN UGANDA

In Uganda, VakaYiko supported a learning exchange programme between Parliament of Uganda's Department of Research Services (DRS) and the Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS). This built on existing discussions between DRS and UNAS, who had been exploring ways to make concrete their relationship to strengthen the link between researchers and the Ugandan Parliament.

Researchers from the DRS' Science and Technology section were seconded to the National Immunisation Technical Advisory Group (and its three subcommittees on tetanus, yellow fever, and vaccine prioritisation) and the Malaria Vaccine Committee. These groups, convened by UNAS, consist of groups of experts who deliberate for up to a year on key policy questions before delivering formal policy recommendations to government. The initiative aimed to strengthen understanding among Parliament's researchers about the lengthy process that academic experts go through in order to make policy recommendations. To complement the pairing scheme and reinforce their relationship, UNAS and DRS also jointly organized a series of knowledge cafés (see Section 3) where researchers from the DRS were brought together with UNAS experts, policymakers and other stakeholders to discuss key policy questions.



## MENTORING WITH MINISTRY OF HEALTH STAFF IN ETHIOPIA

To support participants in using what they had learned in their day-to-day roles and work towards the programme aim of embedding a culture of evidence use in the Federal Ministry of Health, VakaYiko grantee Jimma University paired training participants with facilitators to mentor them on their current policy projects.

The mentoring programme ran for six months, and Jimma University created an online sharing and collaboration community for mentor-mentee and cross-group communications. The mentees were asked to share details of a policy programme or issue they were working on and facilitators (and other mentees) provided guidance and advice through the platform.

The platform was also a good channel for knowledge sharing, where facilitators uploaded web-based resources, attached relevant published papers, documents, policy briefs, systematic reviews, and systematic review summaries. Where required and according to people's need, mentoring was also conducted via email, phone and a few face-to-face interactions.

Those involved in the mentoring reported that the project had improved their skills, knowledge and attitude towards use of research evidence for policy and programme design. Several participants confirmed that the mentoring provided the opportunity for them to put what they had learned during the training into practice, and to get feedback on what they were doing so that they could continue learning and improving their approaches. Not only had many of them made strides in tangible areas of work – such as initiating disease prevention programmes or setting directives, they also reported increased motivation, creativity, confidence and improved communication skills.

## COLLABORATIVE MENTORING IN THE PHILIPPINES

The second phase of the Ateneo de Manila University capacity development programme in the Philippines, following initial training, was a three-month online and face-to-face mentoring engagement. This was conducted between training participants and institutional partners as they went through the adoption and implementation of policies to address collectively identified concerns in education. The face-to-face training had given elected officials, career bureaucrats and civil society groups the opportunity to learn from each other constructively. The mentoring phase provided the space to begin working together and test the most viable policy alternative to address common concerns in education.

To read the full case study by Anne Candelaria see the INASP website: [www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/200](http://www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/200).



## 2.6 LESSONS FROM APPROACHES TO INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

### WHO SHOULD BE TRAINED?

**Staff in government departments and in Parliaments such as researchers and policy analysts are an important focus point for individual-level approaches to build capacity for the use of evidence.** They do the day-to-day gathering and synthesis of information for decision makers, but often their departments are overlooked. Their role in the policy-making process is not always acknowledged by approaches that focus more on high-level decision making and less on the processes underpinning it.

**While core skills are fundamentally important, where possible, training should also consider 'softer skills' such as influencing,** which are important for this group to navigate the political landscapes of policy making. Training for this group must also take into account the realities of resource-constrained environments in which many civil servants and parliamentary staff work, in particular practical issues such as unstable internet connections and lack of access to research.

**Stakeholder engagement initiatives and awareness-raising events are valuable ways to generate interest and buy-in from higher levels of the civil service.** However, feedback from Zimbabwe and Ghana indicated that VakaYiko could have gone further to explore and address skills and knowledge gaps for this group.

**Experience from Politics & Ideas suggests that where training is used, an approach that engages with organizational culture and politics, change management, and leadership may be most appropriate for this level.** Experience from ACTS points to the value of individual, tailored learning opportunities outside the 'classroom' environment that maximize self-directed learning, allow immediate practical application and leverage opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.

**Participant selection was a crucial part of the planning for training in EIPM.** In Ghana, participants from across the civil service who had an existing interest in EIPM applied to the Civil Service Training Centre to participate in the course. This competitive selection process was also used by Politics & Ideas. Experience suggests that, while training just one or two people from an institution may provide fewer opportunities for wider organizational engagement after the training, participants who have applied to attend the course based on their own motivation tend to provide higher levels of attendance and motivation during the training itself.

### HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND DELIVER THE TRAINING?

**A multidisciplinary and collaborative approach is needed to develop content for EIPM training.** Co-constructing knowledge with policymakers and researchers is an important way to achieve this, as is involving multiple different stakeholders in the delivery of the training itself. INASP, ZeipNET, GINKS, Politics & Ideas, Universidade del Pacífico and Ateneo de Manila University all employed different approaches to ensuring that course content was informed by perspectives of researchers, policymakers and practitioners. External speakers from local policy and research bodies became a key feature of the EIPM training workshops in Ghana and Zimbabwe and thus of the final EIPM Toolkit. They were also an important part of Politics & Ideas' online webinars.

**Experience showed that both online and face-to-face approaches to training can be valuable in developing capacity for EIPM.** Online training was appreciated by participants for its flexibility, enabling study on evenings and weekends, which avoided interruptions to work. It was also a cost-effective and logistically simple way for the implementing partners (in this case Politics & Ideas) to reach participants across multiple countries, as compared to face-to-face training, which required more onerous logistical preparation. However, in many cases internet connectivity is unreliable which can make participation in online courses challenging. For teaching core practical skills and facilitating critical discussions between different parts of the local research-to-policy system, face-to-face training was crucial. In future, blended learning approaches could be an effective way to maximize the value of both online and face-to-face training, while reducing out-of-office time for civil servants who are already attending multiple trainings.

**VakaYiko's initial ambition to create a purely learner-centred methodology in the EIPM Toolkit proved challenging.** Neither participants nor trainers were accustomed to this approach, and although a ToT workshop served as an introduction, it was insufficient to produce the needed capacity to run the pilot trainings in Zimbabwe and Ghana as fully learner-centred, especially considering that the content and course materials were also new. During the course of the programme, INASP extensively adapted the EIPM Toolkit to better meet trainers' needs, providing more structure and guidance than would usually be included in a learner-centred approach. The result was a participatory, interactive methodology that was grounded in adult-learning principles and informed by learner-centred methodology.

While VakaYiko core partners had originally envisaged training contributing only to individual levels of change, during implementation of the EIPM Toolkit the programme teams observed that **training workshops can also contribute to other levels of change such as organizational processes and networks.** Training an entire research team from one institution can provide an opportunity for reflection and action planning on a departmental level, acting as a 'springboard' for organizational change as in Zimbabwe.

Training staff from different departments or institutions together, as in Ghana, can strengthen the networks within and between institutions – for example, between the library and the research department in one institution, or between staff from the statistics agency and policy analysts from ministries. Inviting external speakers from across the national research to policy system also provides opportunities for networking and engagement.

**Experience highlighted both the importance of locally relevant case studies for training workshops in EIPM, and the limited number of such case studies available.** VakaYiko partners responded to this by generating new case studies for use in training workshops that describe how evidence was used in a specific policy process, or how a policy-making institution can structure its information support system. However, as the following sections show, both ODI and Politics & Ideas showed that it is also extremely valuable to have a research/analysis component running alongside the training workshops that can gather and systematize what is being learned in the workshops about evidence use, the different meanings EIPM has in different contexts and the structures and systems that support it.

**Providing advice and raising awareness about how to access research and evidence should be a key part of any EIPM training in developing countries.** Lack of access to evidence was reported consistently as a major barrier to using evidence at the individual level. Civil servants and parliamentary staff were largely unaware of the resources potentially available to them through packages such as Research4Life or membership in National Library Consortia, and also unfamiliar with many online open-access initiatives and information portals. In response to this, VakaYiko brought librarians and representatives of the National Library Consortia to the training workshops to give advice on how to access and use e-resources, as well as adapting the content of the EIPM Toolkit to provide more information about e-resources.

## OTHER APPROACHES TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL LEVEL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

**Where different approaches are used at the same time in one institution, it's important to integrate them as closely as possible to ensure a coherency and effectiveness.** One way to do this is to structure the engagement around a specific topical policy or issue that participants are working on. This is illustrated by the experience of ACTS in Kenya and UNAS in Uganda, who linked their job-shadowing and pairing schemes closely with roundtables and events, focusing on specific issues on the legislative agenda.

**Experience from the VakaYiko grants showed that job shadowing was overall more effective and intensive than mentoring in strengthening relationships between researchers and policymakers and fostering learning for both sides.** Mentoring required the mentees to actively seek advice, often in a one-directional manner in which mentors responded to requests from mentees but had limited opportunities to learn themselves. By contrast, job shadowing was more collaborative. For example, ACTS' researchers worked with policymakers to co-produce and review evidence, fostering a two-way learning process where policymakers could draw on researchers' expertise, and researchers could learn more about the policy-making process.

# 3

## APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING CAPACITY FOR EVIDENCE- INFORMED POLICY AT ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

### 3.1 OVERVIEW

Organizational cultures, systems and politics have a crucial role to play in influencing the use of evidence in policy making. VakaYiko worked closely with government partners using different approaches, including in-depth analyses of organizational factors affecting evidence use, strategic workshops to develop internal ‘roadmaps’ for evidence use, and providing support for operational tasks such as updating internal manuals and policies. The most in-depth of VakaYiko’s organizational-level capacity-building work was undertaken by ODI’s Research and Policy in Development Programme (RAPID) with the South African Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA).

RAPID's approach was demand-driven and, working closely with DEA, produced a series of detailed diagnostic studies to build a nuanced understanding of the department's use of evidence, and its organizational culture and systems. The outcome of these studies was the creation of a Research Development and Evidence Framework, which led to a department-wide strategic process for evidence use and closer engagement between two particular policy themes (biodiversity and sustainable development that required more support).

Although VakaYiko's approach in South Africa had been directed at the organizational level from the outset, the Consortium's approach in Ghana and Zimbabwe had started with a more individual-level focus – targeting skills, knowledge, attitudes and awareness. In the needs assessments and sensitization workshops carried out in partner parliaments and ministries in Year 2, organizational issues such as lack of internal information storage, limited IT resources and communication challenges between evidence producers and users within government, emerged very strongly as barriers faced by individuals in implementing EIPM in practice. These issues – along with other deeper factors such as leadership and organizational culture – were discussed and documented throughout the training workshops in Ghana and Zimbabwe.

In response to this, VakaYiko increasingly sought opportunities to learn more about these organizational barriers and try to help participants address them as much as possible within the remit of the programme. For example, GINKS conducted a follow-up exercise with the Civil Service Training Centre to track participants' progress against their action plans and explore the barriers and enablers they had encountered on their return to the workplace after the training. In Zimbabwe, ZeipNET took advantage of their training model which trained the entire research team of one institution together, by adopting an organizational approach to the action planning. Research teams in each partner institution worked together to develop team action plans for enhancing the use of evidence which were then followed up on through the mentoring programme.

VakaYiko also supported a series of analytical products produced by partners to guide us, other practitioners and policymakers, in how to approach organizational capacity development for evidence use in future. These pieces, one produced by ODI based on its work in South Africa and another by Politics & Ideas, which synthesized experience from around the world, identified key factors affecting evidence use at the organizational level.

*“You can have the best evidence in the world, but if you put it through poor processes you won't get good evidence-informed policy making.”*

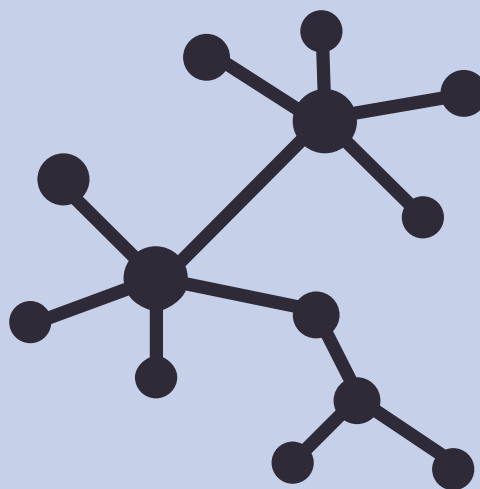
Louise Shaxson, KSI Podcast Series - Investing Evidence in Policy Making (<http://bit.ly/1P6Sm3s>)

## FEATURED TOOL: POLITICS & IDEAS' 'CONTEXT MATTERS' FRAMEWORK

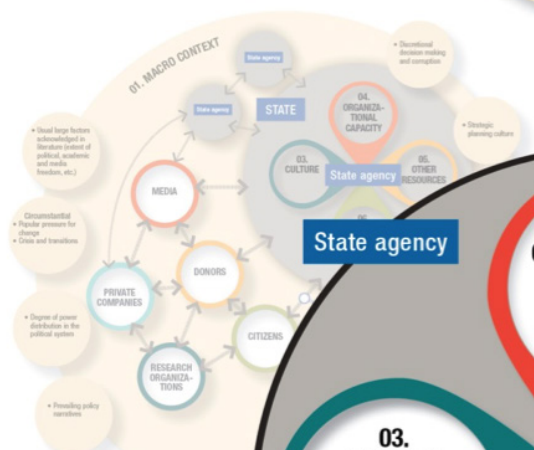
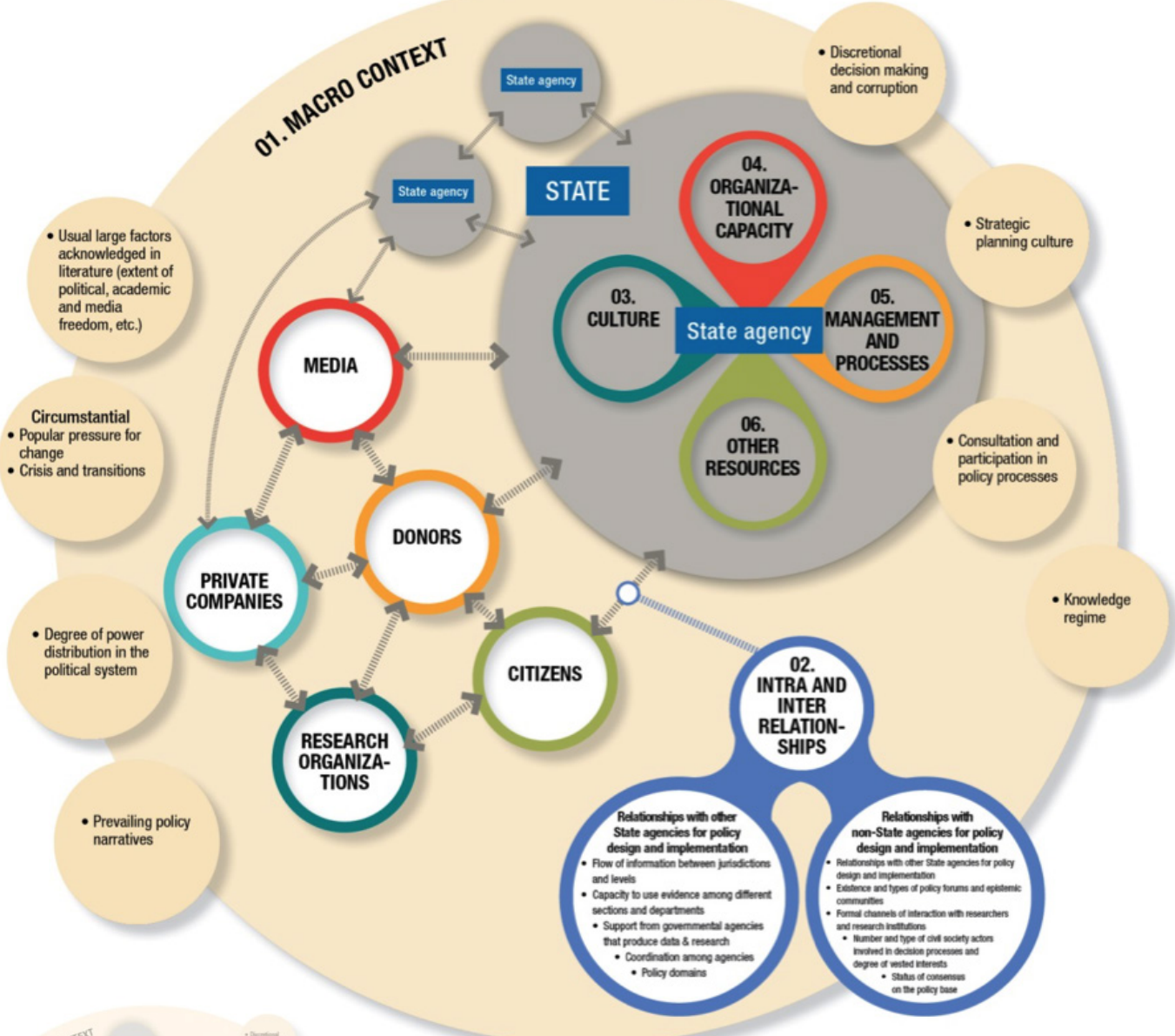
Knowledge Into Policy: Going Beyond Context Matters is a conceptual framework to help policymakers, researchers, practitioners and donors better define windows of opportunity in different contexts to focus efforts on promoting better interaction between knowledge and policy.

The framework comprises six facets or 'dimensions' of context that any government institution aiming to improve the use of knowledge in public policy (as well as those working with these agencies) should consider carefully. These six dimensions fall into two categories: external and internal. The first two external dimensions are (1) macro-context; and (2) intra- and inter-relationships with state and non-state agents. The four internal dimensions are (3) culture; (4) organizational capacity; (5) management and processes; and (6) core resources. The framework aims to help users better assess the contexts in which they operate and, based on careful assessment, detect where the potential for change may be greater and barriers more significant.

For the full framework, see [www.politicsandideas.org](http://www.politicsandideas.org).



# 01. MACRO CONTEXT



# 3.2 UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICY MAKING

## EMBEDDING EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICY MAKING IN SOUTH AFRICA'S DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Ajoy Datta, ODI Research Fellow, and member of the RAPID VakaYiko team

The South African Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) had been working on improving its use of evidence since 2008, but, following the production of a high-level framework for action, progress had stalled. DEA put out a direct request for help to embed evidence-informed policy making across the department, to which a team from South Africa and the UK responded.

The VakaYiko team's working assumption is that capacity – both technical (i.e. content) and in relation to evidence and evidence processes – already exists in DEA, in individuals, teams and organizations. The main challenge was therefore not necessarily a lack of knowledge or skills, but the absence of a set of formal and informal relationships (and some formal processes) that enable individuals to scope, procure and interpret evidence systematically and strategically. Instead of training or sensitization, deliberate change, then, is more likely to happen as a result of a facilitated process that helps people clarify their perception of the problems, understand what solutions will be locally relevant and sustainable, and what that means for the various relationships they have internally and with others.

Early on in the project, RAPID put together a steering group, with representation from senior management within DEA, key transversal government departments (the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation – DPME and the Department of Science and Technology – DST), the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development (PSPPD),<sup>10</sup> and the former Chief Economist in the Office of the Presidency.<sup>11</sup>

### PARTNER PROFILE

#### RAPID

The RAPID programme occupies a unique place in ODI's range of expert teams through its transdisciplinary focus on the relationship between research, policy and practice. The programme investigates what factors contribute to improving evidence-informed policy making and uses these insights to develop practical tools, skills and competencies for policy engagement. This includes understanding how actors work to create policy influence, how they can improve their strategies and tools for monitoring and evaluation and how demand for research-based evidence can be strengthened in policy making.

10. PSPPD is a major EU-funded programme focused on the provision of evidence to support pro-poor policy development.

11. The former Chief Economist in the Office of the Presidency runs a course on evidence for director generals and deputy director generals at the University of Cape Town.

## DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Through a facilitated process, and with DEA leading, the first phase of the project focused on understanding DEA's use of evidence and its organizational context. This phase was designed so as to help DEA hold up a mirror to itself – to observe how its systems, processes and understandings of key concepts combine to produce a mixture of strengths and weaknesses in how it sources, assembles, procures and interprets evidence to inform policy decisions – and to support its reporting requirements. The framework that underpinned this analysis was developed from a wide reading of relevant literature, and refined through discussions with DEA and the steering group. It focused on four areas:

- 1 Changes in the external context:** the wider context within which the department operates. This includes the ongoing pressures to change, any shocks it has received in its recent past, and the current debate and relationships around evidence.
- 2 Progressive leadership and supportive coalitions:** while reforms were typically driven by middle-level managers who work with teams and coalitions, senior officials – especially groups of senior officials – provide and protect the space for change.
- 3 Changes in the internal human context:** the structures, functions and relationships between people and teams; and the incentives, cultures and capabilities that influence how people work.
- 4 Changes to the internal business context:** the internal systems and processes that underpin the rhythm of day-to-day work, and the budget allocation mechanisms that ensure resources flow to the right places at the right time for effective and evidence-informed decision making.

DEA had identified a suite of issues that it wanted to look at during the project, including: a need to review what was actually being done around evidence within the department; a desire to improve participatory policy-making processes; and a need to understand how to use evidence to influence policies made in other departments. Discussions between DEA and RAPID team identified two other study focal points: DEA's internal organizational context; and the external environment for DEA's evidence.

Working together, the DEA evidence champion, Mapula Tshangela, RAPID's VakaYiko team and teams from HSRC and CSIR designed detailed terms of reference for each study. This intensive process provided the basis for (or 'meaning' to) the dialogue that the VakaYiko team hoped to facilitate with and among DEA staff. Conducting the studies and producing final reports for DEA took six months. As findings emerged, they were discussed in different forums, including DEA theme managers' meetings, project team meetings and steering group meetings.<sup>12</sup>

## IDENTIFYING AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

During the diagnostic phase, the VakaYiko team made 52 specific and separate observations about the strengths and weaknesses in DEA's evidence use. Following guidance from DPME, the team grouped these into areas for improvement and considered what activities might be needed to bring about change in the desired direction. This meant understanding how change happens. But as the aim was to facilitate a number of different and related changes (not one distinct change), the team couldn't arrive at one single theory of change. Instead the team identified five, overlapping areas to develop:

- 1 A strategic approach to managing the evidence base**
- 2 A strategic approach to resourcing and planning the evidence base**
- 3 A sectoral approach to the evidence base**
- 4 An inclusive and participatory approach to evidence**
- 5 Sharing good practice**

<sup>12</sup>. The reports remain confidential to DEA but an external-facing overview of the findings is being produced.



With these areas and the analytical framework in mind, the team next developed a department-wide change strategy to improve the use of evidence. This sought to bring about change among senior management and in the internal business context. The strategy did not aim to set out a detailed plan to be followed at all costs; it provided a vehicle for structured discussion among senior and middle management about the changes needed to improve evidence use, and demonstrated DEA's commitment to embedding an evidence-informed approach.

The strategy also provided an overarching structure for work that the VakaYiko team undertook at a more 'local' level – that is, with different South African government departments, policy themes and teams. This local-level work involved developing theme-level research and evidence strategies, engaging with sectoral stakeholders to identify the key short-, medium- and long-term policy questions and the evidence that would be needed to answer them, with DEA's biodiversity and sustainable development teams. Working with these teams – who had both requested support on a strategic approach to evidence – allowed the VakaYiko team to 'test' and review their facilitated approach to helping middle managers become more conscious of their evidence practices, identify how they might improve them and strengthen their relationships with others in the sector.

The project was designed to support the ongoing work of DEA's main evidence champion, responding as flexibly as possible to ongoing changes in the organization and adapting the programme of work to best support this. This was thinking and working politically<sup>13</sup> on an institutional scale. Given the influence of senior management in change processes, the project team needed to decide how to work with the evidence champion to ensure that the results of the diagnostic work were brought to their (senior management) attention.

While to outsiders, the project team's initial reluctance to publish the findings of the studies might have looked like objectivity was being compromised, it is important to allow organizations to think and reflect privately, particularly where in-depth analysis has been done on their systems and processes. Letting DEA reflect on what it had learned without further outside commentary strengthened the likelihood that the findings would be listened to.

There was, however, wider emphasis on evidence-informed policy in South Africa via the Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation, the course on evidence at the University of Cape Town and the sister BCURE project at the University of Johannesburg. This provided a forum in which the VakaYiko team could share findings and learning from our work.

While acknowledging the importance of the VakaYiko project in South Africa to the BCURE programme, it was crucial to recognize that this way of working was very new to DEA. There was nervousness that VakaYiko would take the research results and use them for its own benefit, publishing things that made DEA uncomfortable. 18 months into the project, DEA felt comfortable with presenting some of the project's findings externally (to national and international audiences), which was a key turning point in the project's relationship with DEA senior management.

Meshing a demand-driven approach with DFID's payment-by-results approach, when the team had to be open to what DEA wanted to do with the results as they emerged, was very challenging.

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13. See Andrews, M., Pritchett, L., and Woolcock, M. (2012) *Escaping Capability Traps through Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA)*.

## CHAMPIONING EVIDENCE: PROFILE OF MAPULA TSHANGELA

Based on an interview with Jan Liebnitzky, INASP M&E Officer, July 2016

**Mapula Tshangela is a senior policy advisor at the national Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) in South Africa.**

Her work includes preparing and synthesizing information on sustainable development, green economy, sustainable consumption and production for briefings, policy options and speeches for ministers or other high-level politicians. She also acts as a focal point for science and research, supporting cross-cutting themes such as waste and biodiversity in DEA.

Legislation requires Mapula's theme to produce briefs, speeches and policy options in its day-to-day work that are based on evidence. This evidence can be research evidence, evidence from businesses and civil-society organizations, and evidence from government data.

But Mapula is also deeply interested in the organizational processes and systems within DEA that support and promote the use of evidence for policy making and implementation, and is a strong advocate for strengthening evidence use within the department.

In achieving this, Mapula considers the priority issues to include: how staff prioritize, access and use evidence outputs; network ties with external research institutes, and resource allocation for both procurement of research into specific questions; and synthesis of evidence.

One of the key challenges that Mapula and her colleagues face is, simply put, that "every day is different, as is every request for information that comes in". For example, she may suddenly have to prepare a keynote address for the minister on a nano-technology engagement, where there is not enough information on the topic within the department. Who then does she ask for expertise and where can she access information that is relevant to national and sometimes local contexts? Mapula notes that as not all thematic knowledge is readily available in-house, it is important to have the necessary resources, networks and processes to get the relevant evidence in due time.

Mapula acted as VakaYiko's project manager internally in DEA and also shared her insights and experience as a mentor to Politics & Ideas' development of their context framework (Section 3.1).


The support for this reflection came from a series of in-depth diagnostic studies conducted by ODI, CSIR and HSRC teams during the first and second years of the VakaYiko programme, which were presented to DEA management. For Mapula, the studies were very important because DEA "built the basis for awareness among senior management and their subsequent support to a strategic structured approach to evidence in the organization."

DEA's strategic approach is now in the first of three phases. This first phase focuses on building a common understanding, across the department and its different research themes, about evidence in policy making and the organizational structures needed to strengthen evidence use.

Mapula's position as a focal point for research and science will be valuable in raising awareness and supporting the process as it moves into the second phase, which will look to secure senior management commitment to building on existing processes while embedding concrete actions.

Some of these are expected to include more structured policy evidence needs prioritization with articulated time to answer requests for such information, better internal knowledge management including centralized data bases for relevant evidence, and quality standards on evidence in reports and policy briefs.

In this, "deliberate internal and external co-creation partnerships and steering supported by executive management," says Mapula "will be crucial to sustaining this kind of organizational change."



***"The VakaYiko programme enabled me and other colleagues to take a step back and reflect on the evidence systems and processes in the Department. 'What works well' and 'not so well' were questions that we did not consider in our initial processes back in 2008 when we started the evidence approach."***

Mapula Tshangela interviewed by Jan Liebnitzky, July 2016

## 3.3 MAKING THE MOST OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

### SUPPORTING A NEW RESEARCH UNIT AT THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH IN ZIMBABWE

Data and research are identified as strategic priority areas in Zimbabwe's National Youth Policy, which highlights the "primacy of research, data and information ... [for] development, empowerment of young people and their full integration in national affairs". Needs identified include the "collection, analysis, dissemination and use of socio-economic and demographic data on youth development" as well as the "promotion of relevant policy-oriented research on key youth issues."

The Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment leads the implementation of the Zimbabwe's Youth Policy. The Ministry's Research and Policy Coordination Unit has a mixed mandate, which includes generating evidence to guide the Ministry's work (both through its own research and commissioning external research), evaluating the impact of interventions, advising the Permanent Secretary on youth development matters, and assisting in the preparation of papers for the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee and Cabinet memoranda.

It is also tasked with mainstreaming youth-development policies and programmes across other ministries, as well as developing and coordinating its own youth dialogue and advocacy programmes and managing district level youth information centres. The unit has six researchers, and is headed by a Deputy Director who reports to the Principal Director.

Discussions between ZeipNET and the Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment (the 'Ministry of Youth') about the need to strengthen capacity for use of evidence at both individual and organizational levels began in 2013.

The need for a robust approach to evidence use had been acknowledged in the Ministry of Youth for some time, and approaches debated internally. But the Ministry's collaboration with external stakeholders such as ZeipNET re-introduced the debate. ZeipNET used this re-introduction to push for concrete commitment from the Ministry of Youth to address evidence use. The subsequent creation of the new Research and Policy Unit in 2014 meant that ZeipNET was able to take advantage of a second window of opportunity, namely the chance to advise on the development of a government research unit from its inception.

ZeipNET's partnership with the Ministry of Youth under the VakaYiko programme was launched with a sensitization workshop at the Ministry in August 2014. The Ministry's Research and Policy Coordination Unit was one of three research teams to attend VakaYiko's EIPM Toolkit training, as discussed in Section 2.2 of this report.

In partnership with the Ministry of Youth, ZeipNET also held two policy dialogues: one on strengthening youth economic opportunity, and another on the Zimbabwe Youth Council Review. The latter led to the formation of a Roundtable Action Group comprised of ZeipNET, the Ministry of Youth, and the Zimbabwe Youth Council to advocate for evidence use to support the Youth Council's work.

In the third year of the VakaYiko programme, the Research and Policy Unit Deputy Director and one of the Unit's research officers became ZeipNET mentees, working with ZeipNET's support to implement the action plans they had produced after the EIPM training the previous year. Through the mentoring programme, they worked on a number of initiatives that aimed to clarify the scope and purpose of the Unit as well as to strengthen its networks:

- Engaging a local expert to develop terms of reference to clarify the mandate of the Unit and guide its work.
- Building on this by developing an evidence strategy with support from INASP and ODI, to map out a strategic approach to gathering and using evidence for youth policy in Zimbabwe.
- Supporting the newly formed Zimbabwe Roundtable Action Group for evidence in youth policy to hold an inaugural breakfast meeting/roundtable.
- Participating in a roundtable discussion with corresponding researchers working on youth issues in Parliament, as part of Parliament's new Parliamentary Evidence Series.

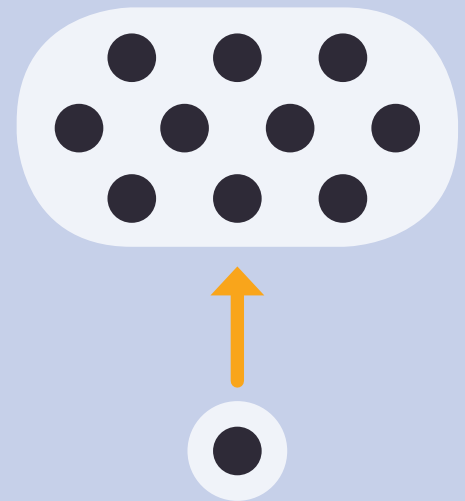
A holistic and flexible approach, comprising individual skills-training, support for organizational processes and a broader public engagement initiative enabled ZeipNET to develop a multifaceted understanding of the Ministry of Youth's needs, and to identify and support links between different areas of the programme as and when they arise. This approach was facilitated by a strong relationship between ZeipNET and the Ministry, characterised trust that had been developed over time.

### BOX 3 CHANGING FROM AN INDIVIDUAL TO AN ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACH: MENTORING IN ZIMBABWE

During the third year of the VakaYiko programme, ZeipNET implemented a mentoring programme with the research teams in its three partner institutions in Zimbabwe: the Parliament of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment. The research teams had all completed training in evidence-informed policy making using the VakaYiko EIPM Toolkit (Section 1) at the end of which they had developed action plans. These action plans formed the basis of the mentoring programme, and were intended to support individual application and strengthening of skills used in the training.

However, while this individual focus remained a key component of the mentoring, the mentees – three of whom were directors – also saw this as an opportunity to spur on organizational change by introducing new initiatives in their departments.

As such, the programme saw a shift from what had been an individual approach, to an organizational one. Building on increased trust and relationships strengthened through the first two years, it was an opportunity to contribute to change at a different level from that which had originally been envisaged. But this open-ended approach also brought with it a lack of clarity and differences in expectations, which led to some challenges at implementation level.



# 3.4 INTEGRATING INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

## TAKING A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE

Contributed by Ronald Munatsi, Co-Founder and Programme Manager, ZeipNET

The Parliament of Zimbabwe's Research Department falls under the Information Services Directorate, and provides support to Parliament members and committees in their legislative, oversight and representational functions. Headed by a director, the Research Department is staffed by 12 full-time researchers who each serve specific parliamentary portfolio and thematic committees as well as responding to requests from individual MPs. They assist MPs with notes to inform their motions for presentation in the House, background papers for conferences and briefs on tabled bills, as well as factsheets, research papers and other information to inform the parliamentary process.

The VakaYiko programme inception coincided with the beginning of Parliament of Zimbabwe's new five-year strategic plan (2014-2018), which included capacity development of parliamentary staff – particularly researchers – as a key strategic issue. This, coupled with the fact that Parliament already had existing relationships with INASP and ZeipNET, meant there was immediate and sincere buy-in to the programme.

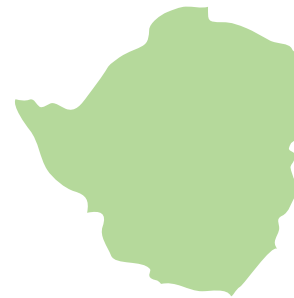
ZeipNET signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Parliament, which intimated that with or without BCURE resources, it was committed to supporting capacity development in EIPM. This laid the groundwork for sustainability from the very outset.

Following a needs assessment to identify EIPM capacity gaps, VakaYiko recognized that an integrated and holistic approach to simultaneously address individual, organizational and systems-level capacity issues would be beneficial for the Research Department. The training workshops sought to develop individuals' skills, not only to access and evaluate the evidence but also to communicate it effectively. ZeipNET also sought to establish and strengthen institutional processes that supported engagement with evidence, and improve networks and links between Parliament and the wider environment of engaged citizens, media, civil society, research institutes and think-tanks, among others in the research-to-policy mix.

In the second year of the programme, ZeipNET conducted a full evidence-informed policy making training course for staff from the Research Department as well as representatives from other allied departments such as IT and the library (see also Section 2.2). Feedback from the training was very positive, reporting not only improvements in participants' own skills, but also positive changes in attitudes within the Research Department with regards to evidence use, and increased demand from decision makers for more evidence products from the Research Department. Following the training, the Director and one Research Officer led the development of an action plan for EIPM based on what they had learnt, which then formed the basis of the ZeipNET mentoring programme the following year.

***“Human capital development and scientific research and development are key drivers of economic development in Zimbabwe”***

Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim-ASSET)  
Clause 3.6.1



The action plan largely centred on building professional and institutional networks to support EIPM, and improving access to evidence within Parliament (Box 3). ZeipNET supported the Research Department to launch and host a new Parliamentary Evidence Series to provide a platform for engagement with diverse stakeholders such as researchers, media and civil society to obtain evidence to inform Parliament's law making, representation and oversight functions. The series aimed to contribute both towards improving the scrutiny of important socio-economic issues, and expanding the Research Department's networks with local evidence producers. To support access to research within Parliament, ZeipNET also worked with the Research Department to start raising awareness of open access and other initiatives that could provide free or discounted resources to the library.

***“[The course] improved my questioning skills which is helping my committees' monitoring visits to look for evidence”***

Course participant, Parliament of Zimbabwe 2016

## BOX 4 PARLIAMENT OF GHANA

VakaYiko's third Parliament partner was Parliament of Ghana. In the second year of the programme, GINKS ran a sensitization meeting on evidence-informed policy making, which was attended by 20 MPs. This was followed by a detailed review of the information support system to Parliament. Observers from Parliament's Research Department attended the VakaYiko training at the CSTC and recommended implementing the course at Parliament. In the programme's third year, GINKS delivered two courses of the EIPM training for Parliamentary staff from a range of different departments such as research, libraries and committee clerks.



## 3.5 MAKING USE OF EXISTING SYSTEMS

### DEVELOPING CAPACITY FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED SCRUTINY IN UGANDA'S PARLIAMENT

Uganda's Department of Research Services aims to support Parliamentary business by providing well researched information and technical advice. Its 34 researchers work in five sections: social development, legal and political, finance and economy, statistics, and science and technology. Each section supports related committees, MPs and Parliamentary staff with research services, data analysis and technical advice. This consists of provision of a wide range of outputs and services including committee briefs and reports (e.g. for public hearings or field visits), research reports (e.g. for motions and debates in the House or information about constituencies) bills analysis and policy analysis, monitoring and evaluation of government policies, and 'on-the-spot' technical advice.

The DRS' current strategic priorities focus on strengthening internal capacity at individual and organizational level as well as building external networks. These reflect the recognition of the role of evidence in policy making as made clear at the highest levels of national planning and strategy, namely in Vision 2040, the National Development Plans and Parliament's Strategic Plan.

Strategies to ensure effective legislation, Uganda National Development Plan 1 (2010-2015), Section 8.1.3: 288.

Strategy 1:

***“improve the quality of research and support services to MPs”;***

Strategy 2:

***“Promote researched, informed and knowledge-based debate in Parliament”;***

Strategy 3:

***“increase advocacy for stakeholders involved in the legislative process” including “legislators participating in meetings for sharing research designs and findings”.***

Building on a five-year project with the UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology and INASP (2008-2013), the DRS approached VakaYiko in 2015 with a request to strengthen its capacity to support evidence-informed policy making in Uganda. Thanks to an extension of funding from DFID, this work was incorporated into the VakaYiko Consortium and led by INASP.

INASP's approach during the first phase of work with DRS was to work as much as possible through Parliament's existing systems, and to draw on local expertise to apply our experience from other VakaYiko countries to this new context.

DRS had already identified competency areas for training through its internal staff performance reviews, and had listed these in its official Training Plan. VakaYiko further explored and refined these competency areas following a three-stage needs assessment, which included a desk review, workshop and survey, and the following training areas, delivered as three workshops, were identified:

- Policy analysis and evidence-informed policy
- Communications and data visualization
- Writing reports and policy briefs

The training workshops were coordinated and overseen by the Ugandan Parliament's own capacity development organ, the Institute of Parliamentary Studies (IPS), with the aim of ensuring that skills and materials would remain for future use. The VakaYiko team worked in partnership with IPS to select trainers, and each workshop was delivered jointly by an IPS trainer (often a senior member of the DRS) in partnership with a local expert. The programme thus strengthened the capacity of IPS' existing trainers and involved new trainers who could become part of its future network. VakaYiko also helped strengthen the IPS itself through commissioning a training policy to help guide its work.

Each training workshop was accompanied by a participatory review and revision of the relevant DRS manuals and policies to support application of skills post-training and the training of newly recruited staff. For instance, after the 'Policy analysis and evidence-informed policy training', the DRS Policy Analysis manual was revised and updated to include a broader section on analysing the evidence base for policy. A follow-up session was also organized to support DRS to begin more thorough analysis of Ministerial Policy Statements, something that had not previously been within their scope. And after the 'Communications and data visualisation' and 'Writing reports and policy briefs' training workshops, updated guidance documents and templates were produced to assist staff in producing a range of quality outputs to support informed debate in Parliament.

During the second phase of the work with DRS – which aimed to strengthen its networks with external evidence producers – VakaYiko worked through the local research-to-policy system. Building on existing discussions that the DRS was having with the Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS), VakaYiko secured a partnership with UNAS to implement this strand of work. This involved a learning exchange initiative which saw DRS staff seconded as observers to UNAS committees and an MP-researcher pairing scheme focusing on thematic areas of current legislative interest: biosafety and biosecurity, governance and accountability, and investment and industrialisation. A series of external events including three Knowledge Cafés based on topics of the pairing scheme and a Research Week to raise awareness about the DRS among new MPs following the elections earlier in 2016 supported this learning exchange.

By building on existing systems and relationships, and taking advantage of the organizational culture of learning and reflection in the DRS, VakaYiko was able to respond to the demand for strengthened capacity of the parliamentary research service. The project took advantage of the momentum already generated within Parliament, which had already allocated significant human and financial resources to both DRS and IPS for capacity development in research. The project also benefitted from strong high-level buy-in from DRS and IPS directors, who were involved throughout and ensured a collaborative team approach was taken to the design and implementation of the project.



## 3.6 LESSONS LEARNED FROM APPROACHES TO ORGANIZATIONAL-LEVEL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Adaptive approaches are fundamental for addressing behavioural and organizational change. VakaYiko has tried as much as possible, to be adaptive and responsive to what emerged from the project. For example, in Zimbabwe, the project team adapted the initial scope of the mentoring, which had focused on individual skills, in response to the emergence of an opportunity for the mentees – a focus on driving change within their institutions. Similarly, in South Africa, the work adapted and responded to the political climate, respecting relationships, trust and confidentiality issues. Flexibility from the funders to allow this iterative process is crucial.

An organizational approach requires a high degree of trust from policymakers given the sensitive environment that they often operate in. In South Africa, it was important to maintain confidentiality while the results of the diagnostic phase were being digested. In fact, the process of diagnosing issues continued long after the studies were completed, suggesting that a diagnostic approach should be integrated throughout the project, rather than concentrated at the beginning. This approach is highly participatory, and requires adaptiveness and responsiveness from both consultants and the organization.

Alternatively, as tested in Zimbabwe, trust for organizational-level work can be built by using other interventions such as training as a ‘gateway’, to allow people to gradually start engaging with the ideas of EIPM as well as getting to know the leaders of the project. In this way, discussions that arise in workshops can transform into new ideas for future initiatives of change.

Paying attention to what is happening in a department beyond the technical capacities and formal written mandate is essential. As all the diagnostic work showed, there are informal dynamics, a culture of doing things, power relationships, etc. that affect how people work and what change is likely to happen. In addition, the formal written mandate of a department may not necessarily give an accurate picture of its day-to-day work. Ignoring informal dynamics may be tempting but is likely to hinder the effectiveness of a capacity-building programme that focuses solely on technical capacity and formal procedures.

It’s not only the research department that is involved in the information support system. Although VakaYiko has mainly focused on supporting research and policy departments, the programme’s experience has shown that there are lots of other players who, if possible, should be involved in discussions too, since efforts for change need everyone’s buy-in. This can include other departments within the institution, sub-national governments as well as a wide range of external stakeholders. Mapping the whole information support system within an institution helps gain insight into the evidence-to-policy cycle and identify opportunities for collaboration. GINKS’ Parliament Review, conducted as a needs-assessment exercise involving interviews and desk review, is one approach to this. The much more in-depth series of diagnostic research studies in South Africa is another approach.

# 4

## APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING CAPACITY AT SYSTEMS LEVEL

### 4.1 OVERVIEW

VakaYiko aimed to foster wider enabling environments for evidence-informed policy in the countries where we work and beyond by strengthening the whole research-to-policy system. This involved a range of initiatives to enhance links between different parts of the research system, including civil-society organizations, research institutes, libraries, think tanks, media, civil servants and decision makers to strengthen relationships for using different kinds of information in policy and practice.

While at individual- and organizational-level the programme's point of entry into EIPM was often technocratic – linked to the professionalization and effectiveness of the civil and parliamentary services – at systems level, interventions tended to engage more closely with issues of accountability and participation, fostering critical dialogue and debate with civil-society organizations and think tanks.

***“Government will further strengthen the current framework for involvement of the private sector and civil society in public policy making, planning and implementation and ensure all public policies are based on sound research, analysis and evaluation.”***

Uganda National Development Plan I

**A fundamental to this was facilitating discussions between researchers and policymakers to enhance researchers' understanding of the policy process, as well as policymakers' understanding and appreciation of the research process.**

One main approach to strengthening these communication channels was through public engagement events, which VakaYiko partners implemented in Ghana, Kenya, Peru and Zimbabwe, based on topics of current interest to policymakers. However, this principle was also woven throughout VakaYiko's capacity development interventions at individual- and organizational-level – for example, in inviting researchers to speak to civil servants about their work during training workshops in Zimbabwe and Ghana, and pairing MPs with National Academy of Sciences fellows in Uganda. In South Africa, VakaYiko is piloting an approach to developing research and evidence strategies for individual policy themes. This involves organizations from across the sector describing what evidence is likely to be needed in the short, medium and long term so that relationships can be built to ensure the evidence is created, assembled and interpreted effectively.

**Networks can strengthen the systems that enable the direct supply of evidence into policy processes at national level.**

VakaYiko's approach to EIPM sees research as one in a range of types of evidence that are useful for policy, including citizen knowledge, M&E information, statistical data and expert knowledge. To facilitate engagement around these different types of evidence, VakaYiko's series of policy dialogues and knowledge cafés in Zimbabwe gave local civil-society organizations, researchers, media and members of the public the opportunity to share their own evidence and experience directly. In Kenya, a series of roundtables gave policymakers the opportunity to meet directly with the climate-change experts who supplied technical evidence to strengthen the Kenya Climate Change Bill. And in Ghana, a policy dialogue series brought stakeholders together at municipal level to discuss evidence use in decentralization. In Peru, the *Alianza para el Uso de la Evidencia*, held many 'how-to' events for policymakers and researchers, and provided a forum for policy research institutes to present their findings directly to policymakers and other interested parties.

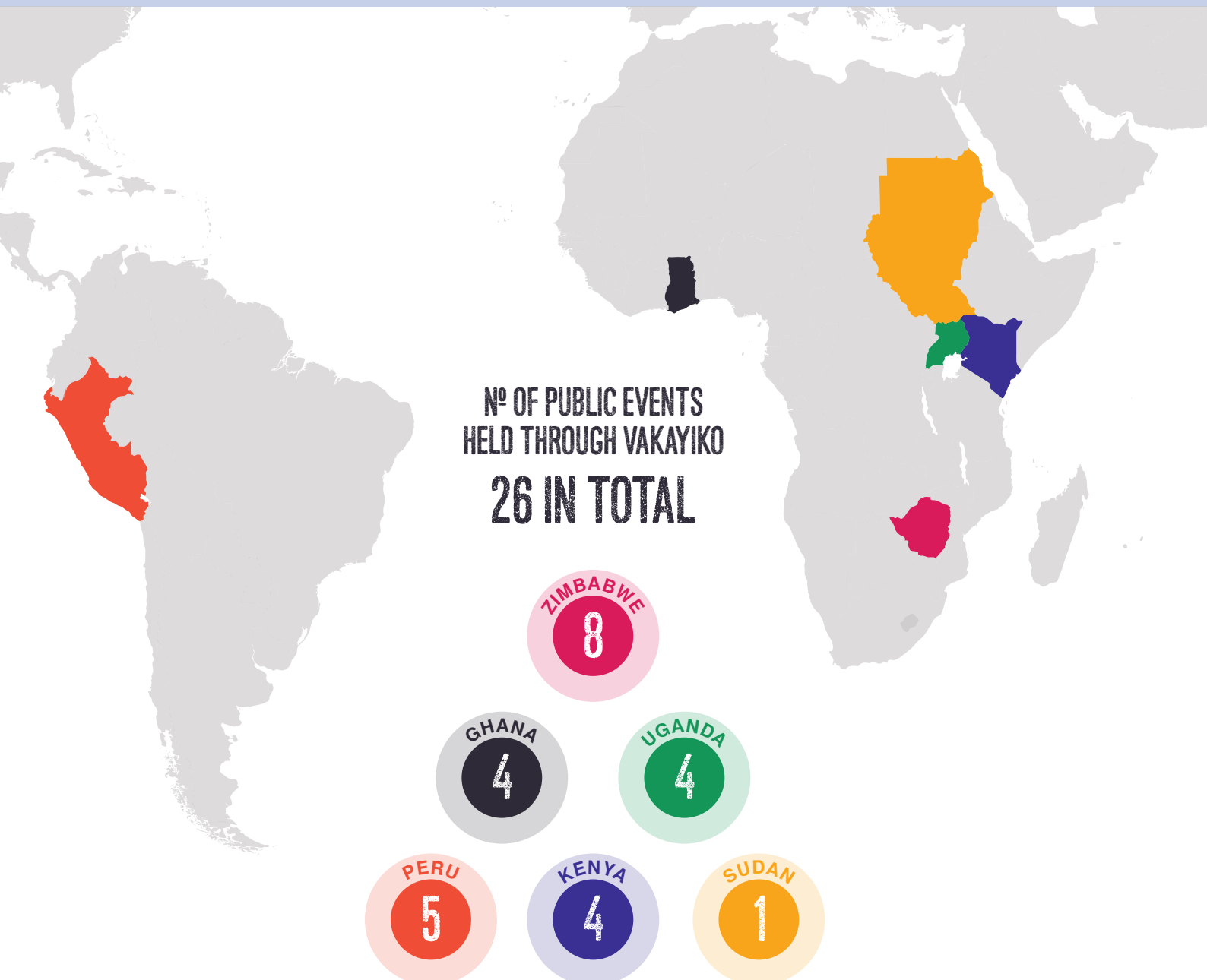
**VakaYiko used its consortium model to strengthen local brokering organizations to sustain these systems at country level beyond the life of the programme.** Rather than considering an exit strategy from the programme at the end of the three years, the programme aimed to build a legacy of self-sustaining institutions with the legitimacy and experience in their local contexts to contribute to capacity development, dialogue and debate for evidence-informed policy making in their own and other countries beyond the life of the programme. In order to achieve this legacy, all of VakaYiko's core member organizations needed to be stronger at the end of the programme than at the beginning.

## BOX 5 EIPM IN DIFFERENT COUNTRY CONTEXTS

VakaYiko's core work was in Ghana, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe. All four countries have high-level commitment in their national development plans and strategies to use evidence to contribute to national development, as well as strong higher-education systems in comparison to their neighbours.

However, the political, economic and social structures of these countries are vastly different. This provided VakaYiko with a valuable opportunity to explore and reflect on how EIPM narratives and processes functioned in different contexts. VakaYiko partners in each country guided the reading of and response to these local contexts, during the course of which INASP observed a number of key macro-level factors affecting the use of evidence which the scope of this report does not allow us to explore in detail.

This included, for example, resource allocation (at multiple levels including civil service salaries as well as organizational infrastructure and funding of research institutions), strength of the executive as compared to the legislature, level of centralization of power structures and policy-making processes, ideological approaches to decision making, and degree of freedom of information.



## 4.2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN EIPM

### CONVENING PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS ON EIPM IN ZIMBABWE

ZeipNET's public engagement strand of work ran in parallel to its training workshops and follow-up mentoring programme (Section 2.2). Working with its government partners for policy dialogues, and independently for knowledge cafés, ZeipNET aimed to involve a range of stakeholders in discussions about policy issues in an inclusive and participatory context, improve policymakers' processes for engaging with different types of evidence, and raise the profile of ZeipNET. Over the course of Years 2 and 3 of the programme, ZeipNET held four knowledge cafés and five policy dialogues on a wide range of topics relevant to Zimbabwe's current policy landscape.

ZeipNET took a participatory approach to selecting topics, developing concept notes collaboratively with NGOs (for knowledge cafés) or government ministries (for policy dialogues). Partnering with ministries required much more liaising to identify topics that were relevant and in synergy with the national economic blue-print, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation, ensuring high level buy-in and attendance from key stakeholders.

#### BOX 6 ZEIPNET'S PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS ON EIPM IN ZIMBABWE

##### Policy dialogues

- 'Trade and industrialisation' in partnership with Ministry of Industry and Commerce (July 2014)
- 'Youth economic opportunity in partnership' with Ministry of Youth (December 2014)
- 'Role of standards in industrialisation and quality assurance' in partnership with Ministry of Industry and Commerce (August 2015)
- 'Youth Council Act Review' in partnership with Ministry of Youth (August 2015)
- 'Building and validating the evidence for the Zimbabwe Youth Empowerment Strategy' (July 2016)

##### Knowledge cafés

- 'Gender mainstreaming' (March 2015)
- 'EIPM in Zimbabwe: challenges and opportunities' (November 2015)
- 'Strengthening the institutional policy landscape in Zimbabwe' (January 2016)

A number of common issues characterizing the research and knowledge system in Zimbabwe arose through the events series:

- A feeling among government partners that research institutions and civil society do little to engage policymakers when identifying policy-relevant research priorities, but that they expect government to make use of their research findings. There is therefore a need for collaborative research, where emerging tools like evidence gap maps can identify priority areas, in order to facilitate dual ownership of the process.
- Researchers, on the other hand, pointed out that policymakers do not provide enough opportunities for this engagement – including platforms to communicate or disseminate their findings. Researchers and civil-society organizations feel that policymakers rarely use their evidence in shaping policy decisions for various reasons, often political considerations that are seen to take precedence.
- The need to package and communicate evidence well in order to engage policymakers, members of the public and other stakeholders in policy making in a more informed and effective way. As one delegate pointed out, "being a good researcher does not make one a good communicator". Others pointed to the need for capacity development for the media on science journalism.
- Absence of clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for implemented policies that could identify progress and strategies to ensure adherence to set targets – an issue raised during a policy dialogue with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.
- Lack of coordination between different public institutions involved in the evidence-to-policy spectrum, and opportunities for ZeipNET to act as a broker. For example, although most government ministries in Zimbabwe have research and policy units, these units have little engagement with local research institutions and think tanks.

One significant outcome of the policy dialogue series was that the second policy dialogue held with the Ministry of Youth – which had focused on the review of the Youth Council Act – resulted in the formation of the Roundtable Action Group (Section 2.2). This Group took the initiative with regards to strengthening the evidence informing the Youth Empowerment Strategy, which resulted in a third policy dialogue to build and validate the evidence underpinning the Youth Empowerment Strategy.

Overall, the public engagement series in Zimbabwe proved to be a valuable way to stimulate discussions about topical policy and evidence issues. Knowledge cafés such were of particular value in strengthening ZeipNET's growing network, as their flexible model meant events could be held in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, from local civil-society organizations to regional platforms such as the Africa Evidence Network. Policy dialogues were much more formal, with a more closely defined scope, but as they were organized in partnership with ministries they tended to enjoy higher-level stakeholder attendance and support.

Although the events demanded significant communications capacity and were at times challenging to implement, ZeipNET's learning and experience proved valuable for Consortium partners who went on to adapt and replicate the approach. In Zimbabwe, all three of ZeipNET's public institution partners (the Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and Parliament) used the mentoring programme to explore ways they could engage better with researchers through roundtables and events (see Section 1). In Ghana, GINKS drew on ZeipNET's policy dialogue model to run a series of policy dialogues at local government level in Ghana, and, in Uganda, UNAS adapted the knowledge café format for its work with Parliament.

## **BOX 7 MONITORING AND LEARNING FROM POLICY DIALOGUES AND KNOWLEDGE CAFÉS**

To assess whether the goals of the policy dialogues and knowledge cafés had been achieved, VakaYiko used three main approaches:

- a. Topic selection was done in a participatory manner together with a ministry department or other partner from civil society. Stakeholder mapping helped to invite the right individuals to the event. By categorizing participants lists, VakaYiko was able to check if participants were indeed wide ranged or not.
- b. To assess how the events functioned as a forum for inclusive discussion, VakaYiko used an observational rubric as well as feedback forms. These helped the programme to recognize and address power dynamics, and ensure the debate was well informed with evidence.
- c. VakaYiko used media output tracking in order to capture uptake in mainstream or social media and increased visibility of ZeipNET.

## **BOX 8 EXPLORING EVIDENCE USE AND DECENTRALIZATION THROUGH POLICY DIALOGUES IN GHANA**

In the third year of the VakaYiko programme, GINKS launched a policy dialogues series in partnership with Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies in four different regions of Ghana. Each of the events explored the same theme: the use of evidence in development planning and projects at the decentralized level. Participants ranged from planning officers from host and adjoining metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies to libraries, research and academic institutions; and think tanks and other civil society organizations. Common issues raised included limited platforms for policymakers and planning officers to engage with the research community in Ghana, varied use of evidence according to resource and political issues, and a need for strengthened capacity in the Local Government Service.

# 4.3 BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND POLICY

## USING EVIDENCE TO INFORM CLIMATE-CHANGE POLICY IN KENYA

The Kenya Climate Science, Technology and Policy Roundtables project was run by the Climate Resilient Economies Programme of VakaYiko grantee the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) in Kenya. The roundtables aimed to help bridge the gap between research and policy making on climate change in Kenya and to strengthen the links between climate policymakers, researchers and think tanks in the country.

In 2013, a climate change bill approved by Parliament was denied Presidential Assent due, among other considerations, to lack of sufficient 'public consultation' – including sufficient consultations with the scientific community. The following year, Parliament reintroduced the Kenya Climate Change Bill, the revision of which saw a new round of public consultations involving policymakers, climate scientists and civil-society groups. These consultations produced an environment receptive to efforts to strengthen the capacity of policymakers for effective use of evidence in climate-change policy.

ACTS's series of four roundtables aimed to encourage dialogue and communication across 'silos' by bringing together Kenya's multiple different stakeholders involved in climate policy, research and practice, using the window of opportunity provided by the ongoing climate-policy debate. Each roundtable focused on a specific policy issue or question. They enabled ACTS and other stakeholders in the climate-change sector in Kenya to share research evidence across different disciplines, sectors and interest groups, and use this evidence to try to improve climate research, policy and practice in Kenya.

ACTS has gained crucial insights into the process of policy making itself: how ideas move in and out of that process; how research is consumed by policymakers; and other factors beyond research that influence policy making. The roundtables have also strengthened ACTS' ability to convene evidence-based multi-stakeholder consultative dialogues. They have allowed ACTS to expand and strengthen its networks and partnerships beyond its traditional partners (e.g. research, government) to include the private sector, youth and other county governments. Importantly, ACTS has been able to identify areas of collaboration, for instance working with the Institute of Climate Change Adaptation at the University of Nairobi, which is dedicated to climate change adaptation issues in its research and teaching activities.

Although there was strong commitment to hold and participate in these roundtables, one of the challenges was coordinating participants' availability. In the face of this challenge, ACTS adapted the sessions to suit participants, by having short and focused discussions. This not only encouraged participation but also helped ACTS to organize meetings with clearly defined objectives and discussion topics with opportunities for follow up if needed. Participants also made use of other platforms in order to continue discussions, including email and collaborative activities.

### PARTNER PROFILE

#### ACTS

The African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) is a leading intergovernmental policy research think tank working on issues of science, technology, innovation and sustainable development in Africa. Its mission is to strengthen the capacity and policies of African countries and institutions to harness science, technology and innovation for sustainable development. For more information see [www.acts-net.org](http://www.acts-net.org).

To support practical application of ideas emanating from the roundtables, ACTS organized a job-shadowing scheme (Section 2.4), which ran in parallel to the events. Participants in the job shadowing scheme were closely engaged in the roundtables as well. The job-shadowing process and roundtables complemented each other, providing a forum for continuous engagement and sharing of ideas and reinforcing the knowledge co-production aspect of the project. The implementation team also noticed increased appreciation by stakeholders that research is a key aspect in policy formulation.

In the face of a problem as complex as climate change, strong collaboration between different stakeholders is vital. As a result of this project, ACTS has been able to create new networks for further collaboration. Partners include the United Nations Environment Programme, the Kenya National Assembly, the Ministry of Environment, the Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security Program, the Climate and Development Knowledge Network, CARE International and Intasave-Caribsave. A number of collaborative opportunities are emerging, including requests by participant organizations to co-host similar roundtables in the future as a contribution to the series.

The trust and partnerships developed during this project led to ACTS being nominated to chair the climate change pillar of the National Data for Sustainability forum, and it is expected that these partnerships will continue beyond the life of the project. ACTS presented its experience alongside its government partners at the Paris Climate Change Conference in December 2015.

The Kenya Climate Change Bill has since become law (the 'Kenya Climate Change Act'), having passed the National Assembly and the Senate and assented to by the President. A draft climate-change policy awaits gazetting by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources.

The full case study, by Winnie Asiti and Cosmas Ochieng, is available at [www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/199](http://www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/199).



# 4.4 BUILDING NETWORKS FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICY

## THE PERUVIAN ALLIANCE FOR THE USE OF EVIDENCE

Contributed by Enrique Mendizabal

### PARTNER PROFILE

#### THE PERUVIAN ALLIANCE FOR THE USE OF EVIDENCE

The Peruvian Alliance for the Use of Evidence is made up of a group of individuals and organizations interested in promoting debate on the necessary methods, tools and capacities that generate a public culture that prioritizes critical use of evidence in policy making.

The Peruvian Alliance for the Use of Evidence is hosted by Universidad del Pacifico in Lima. The Alliance was founded in 2014 as a spin-off of the Evidence based Policy Development Network in Latin America, inspired by the UK Alliance for Useful Evidence. To generate interest and grow its network, the Alliance organized six small meetings to discuss mechanisms and experiences in Peru on the use of evidence for public policy.

All the meetings were hosted by the members themselves and often involved a few members giving a brief presentation on a method or approach associated with the use of evidence in public policy. These meetings provided a safe and dynamic place for the exchange of ideas in which organizations could present their work, while the members of the Alliance asked questions and offered advice. The Alliance ensured that there would be one meeting every month, at the same time and date, creating a rhythm among the members and building trust in the Alliance.

Another important activity was the organization of free public events without any financial support from any donors (it was a self-sustained network in 2014). Communications were kept simple: an online community group, a free audio-sharing account to share recordings of meetings and free access to document and presentation sharing. Facilitation was initially led by Enrique Mendizabal, who was joined by three others by the end of 2014 to form a group of Curators for the Alliance who developed a plan for 2015.

With support of the VakaYiko grant, the Alliance organized nine internal meetings and five public events in 2015, two workshops and an international panel at the Global Development Network's Annual Conferences in February and March 2016. The internal meetings served to introduce new members to the network and to provide a safe place for the members of all sectors including ministries and other public institutions who generate evidence to sit and discuss with those who produce it.

The public events made it possible to reach out to a much broader audience by addressing topics not usually associated with evidence-based policy discussions (e.g. the value of the testimonies of victims of political violence in policy) and new challenges whilst encouraging public discussion. To manage these, the Alliance used a free event-planning and ticketing page, which now works as its main site. Facebook and Twitter worked to complement the online community group with more up-to-date discussions, and make it easier to share resources such as presentations, audio and video recordings publically.

The Alliance also organized workshops in response to requests from the participants of the meetings and public events. For example, Jessica Loyola, one of the curators, reworked content from a module on systematic reviews developed for a post-graduate diploma and Enrique Mendizabal adapted a session on research communications developed through his work with On Think Tanks. The network was also able to take advantage of some fantastic windows of opportunity, such as organizing a public event on the value of testimonies as evidence for policy making to support the Lugar de la Memoria (Peru's newly inaugurated museum on the political violence of the 1980s and 90s).

In the Alliance's third year, it will build on the activities delivered in 2015, increasing the number of workshops and training for members, carry out new research on the role of evidence in policy and organize meetings outside Lima. It will also host the first Evidence Week in Peru.

To read the full case study see the INASP website: [www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/237](http://www.inasp.info/en/publications/details/237)

# 4.5 DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL BROKERING ORGANIZATIONS

## INCREASING CAPACITY OF CIVIL-SOCIETY PARTNERS IN GHANA AND ZIMBABWE

Based on contributions from Jan Liebnitzky, INASP M&E Officer

VakaYiko saw increased capacity of civil society partners in Ghana and Zimbabwe as an approach to sustain its relationships and ideas beyond the life of the programme by leaving a legacy of sustainable local expertise in developing capacity for EIPM. This would contribute to systems-level change by stimulating ongoing public engagement around EIPM, brokering long-term relationships across the research to policy system, and leading activities to support EIPM in practice.

Programme teams assessed and supported partners' organizational capacity in: project and financial management, pedagogical skills, communications, M&E and EIPM knowledge, as well as networks and leadership. These areas were seen to be not only fundamental to the delivery of the VakaYiko programme, but also relevant beyond the life of VakaYiko in terms of supporting organizational growth and sustainability.

VakaYiko used two main approaches to strengthen capacity of its partner organizations:

1. Formal training and support, for example through a pedagogical skills workshop or 'How to...' sessions delivered at consortium meetings.
2. More informal, action-oriented approach using coaching and mentoring techniques to guide practical application over a three-year period ('learning by doing'). Partner organizations worked with advisers from INASP and ODI on key topics, collaboratively developing tools, strategies and processes, gradually increasing the proportion of tasks that they could do independently over time.

### PROJECT AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A coaching and mentoring approach was adopted during the design and implementation of the project to strengthen partners' capacity in these areas.

### PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS

Partners were trained in pedagogical skills, particularly the learner-centred approach, through a training of trainers (ToT) conducted by INASP's in-house pedagogical expert in Accra in Year 1,<sup>14</sup> with a follow-up pedagogical skills training in Oxford in Year 3.

### COMMUNICATIONS

ODI RAPID's Senior Communications Officer worked directly with GINKS and ZeipNET on communications, both remotely and in person through 'How to' sessions and planning workshops held during annual Consortium Meetings.

### M&E

INASP's M&E Officer visited Zimbabwe at the beginning of Year 2 to conduct training on M&E for ZeipNET and GINKS. Over the remainder of the project he provided ongoing support in implementing these plans and reports via email, video conferencing and face-to-face practical support as part of consortium meetings.

### EIPM KNOWLEDGE

The consortium aimed to create a dynamic space to reflect on what EIPM means and how it is useful through ongoing discussion and collaborative working – for example, developing the content for the EIPM Toolkit and sharing the latest literature within the VakaYiko email discussion group.

VakaYiko's capacity development efforts were well received by partners, and annual capacity assessments carried out by INASP's M&E Officer showed that they were effective both overall and in terms of the log frame targets. By the end of the programme, GINKS and ZeipNET were both receiving requests for collaboration and support from a range of stakeholders in government, the private sector and civil society who saw them as potential partners or advisors to help strengthen capacity for evidence-informed policy making at national and international levels.

14. Also participating in this ToT were the trainers from the Ghana Civil Service Training Centre who would go on to deliver the EIPM course in Ghana.

## 4.6 LESSONS LEARNED FROM APPROACHES TO SYSTEM-LEVEL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

**Local organizations with political savviness, networks and credibility are key.** Although the common assumption may be that larger, more well-established organizations will be most effective in this regard, our experience showed that this was not always the case. In challenging political environments such as Zimbabwe, a newer and smaller organization such as ZeipNET – which has strong informal networks but no ‘political baggage’ – can sometimes gain the trust of both policymakers and researchers in order to broker productive dialogue.

**Strengthening local brokering organizations should be a key part of capacity development approaches for EIPM at the systems level.**

Local organizations that can facilitate national networks and conversation around evidence-informed policy making are fundamental to a sustainable systems-level capacity development approach for evidence-informed policy making. As VakaYiko’s experience with its core partners and grantees shows, there are many different types of organizations which can play this role, from grassroots civil-society organizations to networks and associations, universities and think tanks.

**To make the most of partnerships with these organizations, it is important to have a good understanding of their capacity as it relates to programme goals.** This involves building a clear shared understanding of the scope and purpose of civil-society partnerships that is grounded in realistic assessment of partners’ capacity. VakaYiko found that more participatory, reflective tools such as the strengths, weaknesses opportunities, threats (‘SWOT’) analysis were more valuable in this regard than survey-based tools, which relied on self-assessment. INASP and its partners agreed that the core capacity-development areas for ZeipNET and GINKS were the right ones, but that in future it could be helpful to build in more flexibility to be able to include areas of need emerging during the implementation phase, such as networking, leadership and fundraising.

**A holistic approach.** Where public engagement activities run alongside other programme activities such as training or pairing schemes in the same public institutions, they should be integrated as much as possible with these activities to ensure a cohesive and holistic approach. This could involve using communications training workshops to prepare messaging and outputs for public events (as in Uganda) or inviting pairing-scheme participants or training participants to speak at events (as in Uganda and Kenya). Another option could be to sequence the interventions differently, using the events in the first stage implementation

to generate a debate around a specific problem or issue, which is then tackled collectively and in agreement with different stakeholders. Taking this approach would need flexible funding so that it can respond to what emerges from the debates.

**Clarity of scope and objectives of events.**

In the countries where VakaYiko worked, there are many different actors using the terms ‘policy dialogue’ to describe different models, resulting in varying expectations of the scope and purpose of the events. Where objectives were very flexible and broadly defined, as in Zimbabwe, this meant that organizing each event was a delicate balancing act between different stakeholders’ expectations. Having a short, closely organized event with a focused question and a clear purpose (like ACTS or GINKS) can help in this regard.

**Evidence-informed policy making is not limited to certain types of political systems or levels of resources.**

One of the most rewarding aspects of VakaYiko was the ability to test different approaches to capacity development for EIPM in a wide range of contexts. The programme was able to learn how working collaboratively with local partners across the research-to-policy system results in different conceptualizations and applications of EIPM principles to meet local needs and contexts. This involves being open about the realities of resource-constrained environments both for policymakers and for researchers, who in many cases are operating around significant data and information gaps. It also requires flexibility in the framing of EIPM, as in some cases a more technocratic approach at the initial stages can act as a ‘gateway’ to more complex and politically challenging discussions later on.

**Many of the most important and sustainable relationships across the research to policy system are informal.**

This means that key points of collaboration and feedback between brokering organizations such as GINKS or ZeipNET and policymakers happened informally in day-to-day work and social life, rather than within the fixed-programme structure. These relationships are also constantly changing and adapting in line with political realities, interests and motivations at local level. While these points of contact can often be the most meaningful and durable, they are also difficult to capture within formal programme structures and M&E approaches. In future, flexible approaches to stakeholder engagement and feedback could be explored to enable the programme to better benefit from and respond to reflections from these relationships.

# 5

## WORKING IN A CONSORTIUM

VakaYiko's approach to capacity development is based on three premises:

- Working with local organizations that are well placed to read and respond to changes in the political landscape.
- Strengthening systems that already exist instead of creating new ones.
- Leaving a legacy of organizations that are able to respond to future research uptake capacity needs.

It was the opinion of the VakaYiko members that working as a consortium was a good way to make the most of all partners' experience. The programme could have been structured unilaterally, with each one of the partner organizations in each country, but partners would have missed out on learning from each other's expertise and strengths.

VakaYiko's consortium approach aimed to develop distinct strands of work within a communal setting so that each partner learnt not only from their own work but also from the work of the others. In this way the programme partners would all develop a wider repertoire of skills and tools than if we had worked individually.

Sharing and learning within the group was always key focus in VakaYiko. Previous sections of this report – particularly in 'systems level' of capacity development – have described the premises stated. In this section we want to share some reflections about how this 'consortium model' has worked for us. This section explores some of the opportunities, challenges and lessons that the programme hopes are useful for those wishing to pursue a similar methodology to deliver collaborative programmes. What is captured here is a synthesis of what was shared, discussed and captured in many other outputs such as annual meeting reports, quarterly reports, internal reflections, discussions and after action reviews.

## 5.1 CONSORTIUM OVERVIEW

The consortium was formed by a group of five organizations, led by INASP, working in three countries. ZeipNET, GINKS, and ODI led implementation of activities in Zimbabwe, Ghana and South Africa respectively, and were the primary points of contact for all government partners.<sup>15</sup> INASP led the overall design of M&E for the programme at global level, working directly on implementation with colleagues in local partner organizations. Communications for the Consortium was led at global level by INASP's communications team, with country-level communications coordinated by ODI-RAPID communications staff liaising with local partner organizations.

Bringing this group together was possible partly because of previous relationships: INASP's Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI) had worked to strengthen research and knowledge systems in the global south from 2002 until 2013. Through this and other work, INASP had developed relationships with the Consortium partners.

The grants scheme that ran in parallel to the core VakaYiko interventions was intended to give provide the programme with opportunities to test different ideas and approaches to incentivizing the use of evidence. A total of eight projects were going to be funded and, although

at the beginning it wasn't envisioned that these projects would be incorporated into the main consortium, with time it became clear that this could be beneficial. VakaYiko then slowly starting incorporating these organizations within the core consortium, expanding the network of organizations working on EIPM.

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15. Parliament of Uganda joined the Consortium for the third year. The first phase of the year-long project was led directly by INASP's EIPM team. The second phase was led by the Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS).

## 5.2 OPPORTUNITIES

**Share knowledge and learn from each other.** One of the main benefits of the consortium model was the potential transfer of knowledge across organizations. It gave organizations the opportunity to develop their skills and learn from each other by sharing expertise – the consortium benefitted from ODI RAPID’s strong communications team and INASP had previously helped GINKS and ZeipNET in developing their M&E capacity. Consortium members ODI and Politics & Ideas, both of which produced analytical pieces on EIPM during the course of our programme, relied on the insight and expertise of our partner institutions in-country.

Through the programme’s annual consortium meetings, held in partner countries, VakaYiko created spaces for reflection, learning and collaboration. For ZeipNET and GINKS, the international partners in the Consortium offered the opportunity to strengthen their capacity in key areas such as M&E and pedagogical skills as they grew and developed their organizations. ODI had good expertise on how to work and write for government which helped local researchers in CSIR and HSRC engage better with DEA. Working as a consortium provided multiple opportunities for sharing ideas and finding innovative and creative solutions, which would have been impossible to achieve working in isolation.

### BOX 9 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN A CONSORTIUM

- Using a virtual platform (D-groups) to share resources, news, discuss, etc.
- Keep regular interaction between members, not only one-to-one but also as a group
- Combine virtual and face-to-face interactions
- Create a safe space for open conversation and reflection
- Use branding to create a shared public identity

**Contextual knowledge.** In-country partners strengthened UK-based organizations’ understanding of the political, economic, social and cultural dynamics as well as important operational and resource considerations required for the smooth day-to-day functioning of the project and appropriateness of the interventions. Contextual knowledge also means understanding the political dynamics. In all political environments but particularly in difficult political systems, like Zimbabwe, working with local organizations is fundamental. INASP or ODI would not have been able to navigate difficulties on their own.

**Access and relationships.** Working with government is extremely difficult everywhere. Usually, policymakers have very little time; they are under constant pressure. In difficult

political contexts, gaining the trusts of these stakeholders is difficult. Northern organizations wouldn’t have been able to engage with governments of parliaments if it hadn’t been done jointly with local stakeholders. ZeipNET was able to navigate a very challenging environment because it was able to informally occupy a space. In South Africa, the champion within DEA was a key partner to help ODI RAPID gain access and build trust.

**The chance to build international networks** to support and extend local organizations’ work, liaise with international stakeholders, participate in international conferences and become part of the global EIPM debate. For example, increasingly Ginks and ZeipNET have been invited to participate in panel discussions, to talk about their stories and experiences.

**The whole is more than the sum of its parts.** The reputation and credibility of the organizations was seen to increase as a result of the consortium: ZeipNET found it better to say that it was working with four other organizations in different countries and not just on its own, and INASP was able to gain access and credibility as a result of their partners. The consortium model was also perceived to be advantageous for sustainability purposes, as the goal was to ensure that each core country would have an organization working on EIPM which would stay connected after the end of the programme.

## 5.3 CHALLENGES

**Coordination within the Consortium.** When two organizations partner unilaterally, there is a risk of creating a disconnection amongst the whole group. In VakaYiko, INASP worked more closely with GINKS and ZeipNET, not just in a supportive role but in a project implementation role, while ODI worked more closely with DEA. At times, this model of two projects working in parallel was challenging to coordinate within one programme. However, by Year 3, VakaYiko had begun to bring these two approaches closer together, with the Ghana and Zimbabwe strands of work increasingly thinking about more organizational-level capacity issues, and the ODI approach from South Africa being adapted and piloted as part of ZeipNET's mentoring programme with the Ministry of Youth in Zimbabwe.

**Sharing learning while working with government.** VakaYiko was strongly focused on testing different approaches and sharing learning. However, this proved challenging when working with public institutions, particularly in South Africa but also in Ghana and Uganda. In South Africa, ODI gradually built an in-depth, collaborative relationship with DEA. Trust was an essential element of this, as DEA was initially apprehensive about the prospect of VakaYiko taking an extractive approach to 'researching it' and using the results publicly for the benefit of the Consortium. To earn this trust, VakaYiko emphasized ownership and co-creation, enabling DEA to lead on decisions about when and how to share its reflections from the process facilitated by ODI.

**Agreements and coordination.** The other side of the coin of working as a consortium is getting agreement on different things, such as ways of working, timing and negotiating different approaches to project delivery. Members represent organizations of different sizes, expertise and levels of development working in different contexts. And although this allows the consortium the unique opportunity to simultaneously use multiple approaches to build capacity, it is also important to be in agreement. It was not an easy task but, through open conversation and reflection, the Consortium gradually improved collaboration and alignment.

**Balancing objectives and managing expectations.** Linked to the points already outlined is the challenge of developing capacity of consortium partners – that is, striking a meaningful balance between the capacity development of the partner organizations and that of the policymakers. For example, not every organization will have a full M&E team so it is important to ensure that programme staff are able to collect data and monitor the project adequately while having support from other consortium members with expertise. In this way, the Consortium builds capacity by doing as opposed to running a stand-alone capacity-development strand of work.

## 5.4 LESSONS LEARNED FROM CONSORTIUM WORKING

**Country- and global-level contexts for programme delivery.** Working as a group requires certain level of understanding of the way things are done, the internal capacities that our organizations have and the context in which the programme works. Understanding these are key to allowing a smooth flow in the work. This wasn't always the case, as managing priorities and deliverables at country and programme level simultaneously sometimes resulted in competing priorities and different timeframes. Flexibility in work planning and project management is crucial to tackle these issues, but, under the payment-by-results system where quarterly milestones are set in advance, this is unfortunately not always possible. VakaYiko in-country partners helped UK-based partners understand and negotiate processes and timing at country level.

**Collaboration versus time pressure.** Although VakaYiko promotes collaborative work, on some occasions this approach proved to be challenging and created some tensions between what needed to be achieved and the support partners were given. For example, developing an M&E plan that pioneered a 'learning-by-doing' approach was difficult to implement as it takes time to understand the purpose and the methods. Although it took some time to get the right approach, in the end, the programme found a way to make the most of the process, balancing INASP's input and partner's ownership. In cases where partners had previous knowledge and experiences, like in the case of communications, collaboration and co-production were easier.

**Balanced capacities.** For most consortium members, many of the processes being undertaken by the VakaYiko programme are new. Ensuring the project work plan is proportionate to organizational capacity and prior commitments is very important – not only to avoid overwhelming partners with lots of tasks and thus hindering quality of outputs but also to ensure that any organizational capacity of consortium members that is built is sustainable beyond the project.

**The grants scheme** that was run in parallel to the core activities in VakaYiko was meant to not only test different capacity-development approaches but also to expand the consortium. In practice, however, this was difficult to do from the start as core VakaYiko members were trying to get to know each other and building trust in the programme itself was difficult enough. However, over time, particularly when some of the core projects were on track, VakaYiko was able to integrate grants better. The programme started by inviting them to quarterly video-conferencing meetings so that they could share their experiences. For example, the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) shared lessons surrounding public events with policymakers and job shadowing with ZeipNET and GINKS. Increased engagement with grants opened new learning and opportunities for collaboration.

**Include policymakers in the Consortium.** Within the Consortium, approaches were very collaborative and participatory. But particularly in Ghana and Zimbabwe this sometimes came at the expense of involvement from partnering public-sector partner institutions. In hindsight, the programme could have developed stronger relationships with government/parliament partners by including them in the international space of the Consortium rather than leaving the relationship to local organizations only. This could have enabled better capture of feedback, more participation from public institution partners at key points in the programme design and implementation, and generated discussion and insights to share across the Consortium.

**Branding and identity.** Having VakaYiko Consortium branding helped in several ways. It gave a sense of all being part of one programme as well as individual organizations. It gave credibility to organizations both local and international, providing a sense of network, it increased scope, along with boosting their exposure and recognition. The branding also helped to give identity to the Consortium, carrying its own name, values, ideas and insights, differentiating it from other BCURE organizations.

However, sometimes a strong approach to programme branding can be at odds with principles of ownership. For example, in South Africa, DEA staff felt that the VakaYiko branding did not generate a shared sense of ownership, particularly of the reports from the diagnostic phase. Later reports and presentations adopted the DEA brand entirely, or found a way of co-branding that was as close to DEA's own brand as appropriate.



## 5.5 WHAT WERE THE SUCCESS FACTORS?

**The Consortium grew into safe reflective space**, which provided rich opportunity for learning about partnerships for evidence-informed policy. In addition to frequent communication between INASP and partners on a day-to-day basis, an online community was used for group discussions and information sharing. This was supplemented by quarterly meetings of the whole Consortium held via video-conference, and annual face-to-face Consortium meetings held in Ghana or Zimbabwe. Usually lasting two to three days, these events typically included workshops to take stock and reflect on progress and challenges, capacity development sessions on key topics of interest led by Consortium members, and external speakers presenting on the country context for EIPM.

**Active leadership.** As part of its role as leader of VakaYiko, INASP tried as much as possible to support emerging partnerships and opportunities for transferability and replicability of approaches across the Consortium. After VakaYiko grantee Politics & Ideas successfully piloted its online course in Latin America, INASP supported it to adapt and deliver the course in four African countries. When an opportunity arose for ODI's model of strategic evidence workshops from the Department of Environmental Affairs in South Africa to be adapted to fit within ZeipNET's mentoring programme with Ministry of Youth, INASP brokered the relationship.

**Building a dynamic, adaptable and iterative network.** It was valuable to be able to adapt and add new relationships and members, such as the Parliament of Uganda, as well as to support emerging collaborations and peer learning such as the Politics & Ideas online course and the transfer and adaptation of ODI's approach work in South Africa to the Ministry of Youth in Zimbabwe. A large part of this was due to the programme's logframe, which had included specific requirements to transfer approaches (without specifying where to) and to generate demand for new partnerships and initiatives. Another part of it was due to the relatively frank and open relationship between INASP and DFID.

# 6

## CONCLUSIONS

VakaYiko was an exploratory programme that tested a wide range of approaches to capacity development for evidence-informed policy making. The programme worked on three continents with partners from across the research-to-policy system including universities, think tanks, and civil-society organizations, as well as ministries, parliaments, and civil service training colleges. VakaYiko partners strengthened the capacity of public institutions and their staff to gather, appraise and use evidence for policy making through public engagement activities, in-depth organizational work, learning exchanges and pairing schemes, and many different approaches to training.

This report outlines key learning points from the programme's experience building capacity for EIPM at individual-, organizational- and systems-level. It includes reflections from across the Consortium on VakaYiko's capacity-development approaches and partnership models. It explores some of the ways that the Consortium supported South-South learning through adapting and replicating approaches in different contexts, as well as drawing together some common lessons learned about supporting change in public institutions. It also describes the approaches to sustainability which underpinned all VakaYiko partners' approaches to capacity development.

VakaYiko took a collaborative and reflective approach to its work, and it has been rewarding for all its partners to see new networks and joint initiatives begin to emerge as the programme approaches its close. Contributors have shared their lessons and experience in this report with the aim of helping to inform future capacity development work and inspire new collaborations in the area of evidence-informed policy making.

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