

**AFIDEP**

**African Institute for Development Policy**  
Bridging Development Research, Policy & Practice

# Training as an intervention for building capacity for evidence use: experiences from Kenya & Malawi

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# Outline

- Introduction
- Training Programme
- Results of Training Programme
- Lessons & Reflections

# Introduction

- Weak capacity to find & use evidence among decision-makers remains a major barrier to evidence use
- As part of DFID's BCURE Programme, AFIDEP & partners designed & implemented a capacity building programme for increasing evidence use in Kenya & Malawi, Nov 2013 – Jan 2017
  - Strengthening **Capacity to Use Research Evidence in Health Policy – SECURE Health** (more details – [www.afidep.org](http://www.afidep.org))
- A major component of SECURE Health programme is a **comprehensive training programme** on evidence-informed policymaking (EIPM) for **technical staff** in the **MoH & parliament** (i.e. mid-level policymakers) in **Kenya & Malawi**

# SECURE Health EIPM Training Programme

- Prior to the design of the training programme, we conducted:
  - Literature review on capacity building for evidence use
  - Capacity needs assessment of the technical staff in MoH & Parliament in Kenya & Malawi



# Objective of EIPM Training Programme

- Enhance the capacity of mid-level policymakers in:
  - Appreciating the complexity of decision-making processes & the critical role of evidence
  - Accessing research evidence
  - Appraising/assessing the quality of research evidence
  - Synthesizing a wide range of research evidence into concise policy advice
  - Applying research evidence in decision-making



# EIPM Training Programme – Key Features

## 1. Development of an EIPM training curriculum

- Module 1 - Foundation of policymaking & defining a policy question
- Module 2 – Accessing evidence
- Module 3 – Appraising evidence
- Module 4 – Synthesizing evidence
- Module 5 - Applying evidence

*Informed by **adult learning principles** & **curriculum field-tested** in Kenya & revised*

## 2. Competitive selection of learners – faced challenges

# EIPM Training Programme – Key Features

## 3. Delivery of EIPM training workshops

- Pre-training reading & engagement
- 5-day training workshop – learners initiate development of a policy brief
- Pre- & post-test survey; session evaluations
- Learners' contract

## 4. Conduct 1-year training follow-up programme for all learners

- One-on-one follow-up survey every 2 months
- One refresher workshop every 4 months

## 5. Present certificates to learners & **disseminate policy briefs developed by learners**

# EIPM Trainers

- Trainers drawn from SECURE Health consortium (AFIDEP, FHI 360, College of Medicine, MoH)
- Training of trainers conducted in:
  - EIPM training curriculum
  - Pedagogical training techniques & adult learning principles
- Trainers served as mentors to learners as well as review & provide feedback on draft policy briefs during follow-up process



# Breakdown of Trained Staff

	Kenya		Malawi		Total
	MoH	Parliament	MoH/MoY	Parliament	
Workshop 1 (Mar 2015)	15	5	13	5	<b>37</b>
Workshop 2 (Apr 2015)	14	6	12	7	<b>39</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>76</b>
<i>Total Trained (country)</i>	<b>40</b>		<b>36</b>		

# **Results of Training Programme**

***Some Highlights of the Pre & Post-  
Test Results - Kenya***

# Pre & Post Test Results-Kenya: Workshops – 1 & 2

Immediate EIPM Training impact:

- The overall rating of the effectiveness of the training workshops in improving participants' knowledge, skills, & attitudes for accessing, appraising, synthesizing & applying evidence was well above 4 on a Likert scale, for all workshops

# Pre & Post Test Results-Kenya: Workshops – 1 & 2

Extent to which workshop objective was met:

- Workshop 1 participants rated all the objectives from 3.95 & above using the Likert scale 1 to 5
- Workshop 2 participants rated all objectives from 3.85 & above

# Pre & Post Test Results-Kenya: Workshops – 1 & 2

## Effect of training on skills

- Participants' ratings of their skills in accessing, appraising, synthesizing & applying evidence pre & post training revealed an increase of 1 or more points in the rating post-training
  - Indicating a perceived increase in the skills that the training covered

# Pre & Post Test Results-Kenya: Workshops –1 & 2

Effect of training on Barriers to Evidence Use  
(barriers relating to technical knowledge & skills)

- Participants' rating of these barriers improved, indicating that the training had helped alleviate the barriers

# Pre & Post Test Results-Kenya: Workshops – 1 & 2

- The main aspect of the workshop that was rated poorly was **time allocation**
  - With most participants indicating that the time allocated for the training was inadequate

***Experience with the 1-Year EIPM  
Training Follow-up Programme***



# Why the EIPM Training Follow-up?

- Support learners in application of skills acquired (on-the-job support)
- Identify & address gaps in the training offered
  - Areas where learners need more technical assistance, & provide refresher training or on-the-job assistance
- Learn about how learners are applying skills acquired & challenges they still face
- Support learners in the revision & completion of policy briefs

# Structure of the Follow-up Process

1. Individualized contact with each learner via email/phone/face-to-face – once every 2 months
  - To find out how learners are applying knowledge & skills, the challenges they still face in evidence use, identify areas where they need support, & track progress on policy briefs
2. One follow-up workshop once every 4 months
  - To conduct refresher training on specific EIPM modules
  - To review & provide feedback on draft policy briefs
  - To show-case/deliberate policy briefs with senior policymakers

# Highlights of the follow-up programme

- Conducted 5-waves of the individual follow-up support process
- Conducted 3 sets of follow-up workshops:
  - First 2 delivered short refresher training on appraising evidence & policy brief development (i.e. research evidence synthesis)
  - Last workshop disseminated policy briefs developed
- Many examples of skills application:
  - Drawing attention to research evidence within their units
  - Finding research relevant to their work or the work of their units
  - Assessing quality of research evidence before using it
  - Using evidence to draw attention to neglected issues
- 15 policy briefs completed in Malawi, 10 in Kenya
  - These have been disseminated at the final follow-up workshops

# Key Follow-up Challenges

- Actual on the job-support has been difficult:
  - Parliament declined, citing sensitivity
  - Many MoH learners were not forthcoming on sharing real work tasks where we can support
- Progress on policy briefs development was slow
  - Learners too busy
  - Poor Internet connectivity at work
- Poor turn-up at follow-up training workshops

# How did we handle the challenges?

- More ownership & involvement of MoH/Parliament leadership in the follow-up process
  - Extensive consultations with leadership of the MoH & parliament to seek their ideas & commitment to address the challenges
  - Convening follow-up workshops
  - Training follow-up contracts shared with Supervisors
- One-on-one or small-group follow-up consultations for those unable to come to refresher workshops

# How did we handle the challenges?

- Increased interaction between learners & trainers/mentors
- Systematized the follow-up process in order to collect comprehensive data to enable structured learning from the process

# Lessons & Reflections

# Well designed & implemented EIPM programme is effective in building knowledge & skills in research evidence use

- Pre & post-test results; quality of policy briefs developed
- Testimonials of how learners are using skills
  - Many show how learners are changing their thinking & approach to decision-making
- External evaluation results:
  - Reveal changing practices towards a culture of evidence use



# Lessons on specific training components

- Follow-up programmes in contexts with weak culture for evidence use & general accountability need careful & intense planning
  - Need to think about incentives - Is the solution close involvement of supervisors before & after the training?
  - Can drain project resources
- Anticipate failure & mitigate, or be clear on how to handle it when it happens
  - Good relationship with the leadership of the beneficiary institutions is critical
  - Find ways of gauging commitment of learners ...

# Lessons on specific training components

- Collecting detailed & systematic follow-up data is critical for documenting learning from the programme
  - Helps make informed decisions on how to deal with unresponsive learners
  - Provides evidence for focusing short refresher trainings
  - Provides comprehensive data for publications to share learning
  - But, it can drain resources, especially in milestone-based fixed contracts

# EIPM Curriculum available open access on AFIDEP website

- We'll conduct a **Webinar on October 19, 2016** to **launch the EIPM curriculum** & share tips on best ways to use the curriculum drawn from our experience

***We hope you can join us in the Webinar!***

# We Acknowledge our Partners



Government of Kenya:  
Ministry of Health,  
Parliament



Government of  
Malawi: Ministry of  
Health, Parliament



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