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# Planning for stakeholder engagement and evidence use

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“It takes a crisis for evidence to become relevant and useful.”



# Evidence synthesis findings: the use of evidence in crisis zones in LMICs

Study looked at humanitarian crises including natural and human-made hazards

Examined evidence use within:

**Political system**

**International humanitarian aid system**

**Health and health research system**

**Reference:** Khalid, A.F., Lavis, J.N., El-Jardali, F. *et al.* Supporting the use of research evidence in decision-making in crisis zones in low- and middle-income countries: a critical interpretive synthesis. *Health Res Policy Sys* **18**, 21 (2020)

# Evidence synthesis findings: Political system

- **Strategy**: Used stakeholder dialogues to place relevant evidence alongside professional opinions and other inputs
- **Strategy**: Use of rapid evidence service to answer urgent questions alongside stakeholder opinions
- **Barrier**: Previous decisions resulted in governments relying on professional opinion alone
- **Barrier**: Different actors lobbied government about preferred management approaches



# Evidence synthesis findings: International humanitarian aid system

- **Strategy:** Use available evidence websites to access systematic reviews and other research evidence
- **Strategy:** Provide training to enhance aid worker's capacity to use evidence
- **Strategy:** Build strategic partnerships between aid workers and researchers to ask relevant questions
- **Facilitators:** champions advocating for evidence use and technology platforms for sharing evidence
- **Barriers:** Inadequate access to evidence and strategies for communication and evidence sharing



# Evidence synthesis findings: Health and health research system

- **Strategy:** Engage decision-makers in research priority setting
- **Strategy:** Develop and disseminate actionable messages from systematic reviews
- **Facilitators:** For government units, leveraging software to facilitate evidence-informed discussion; For researchers, having funds for dissemination
- **Barriers:** Evidence does not meet decision-makers' needs and not presented in a concise, accessible manner



# Takeaways from this evidence synthesis

- Important to identify system and context specific strategies to address the barriers and leverage the facilitators of evidence use
- Rapid response is crucial in a crisis situation
- Evidence needs to be relevant and presented in a concise and accessible manner
- Technology platforms can facilitate evidence use

# Stakeholder engagement and evidence use plan

## Components of the plan

- Context analysis
- Evidence use objectives
- Stakeholder mapping and analysis
- Risks
- Stakeholder engagement and communication plan
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Learning

# What should you do?

- A core team - senior members of research team as well as research uptake and communication specialists - should be involved in drafting the stakeholder engagement and evidence use plan
- CEDIL guidance: 15 per cent of the budget can be allocated for implementing this plan
- Treat it as a dynamic plan that needs to be revisited often
- Don't worry about word count in filling out sections



# Context analysis



**Context analysis is important to assess:**

- Political economy factors affecting evidence use
- Stakeholder demand, buy-in and interest
- Institutional structures and mechanisms
- Capacity to use evidence

# Defining evidence use objectives

- Be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound
- DFID identifies three types of evidence use: Transparent, Embedded and Instrumental use
- Identify windows of opportunity
  - Can your study contribute relevant evidence for Covid-19 response or to post-Covid phase?
  - Are there opportunities for being useful to decision-makers right now?

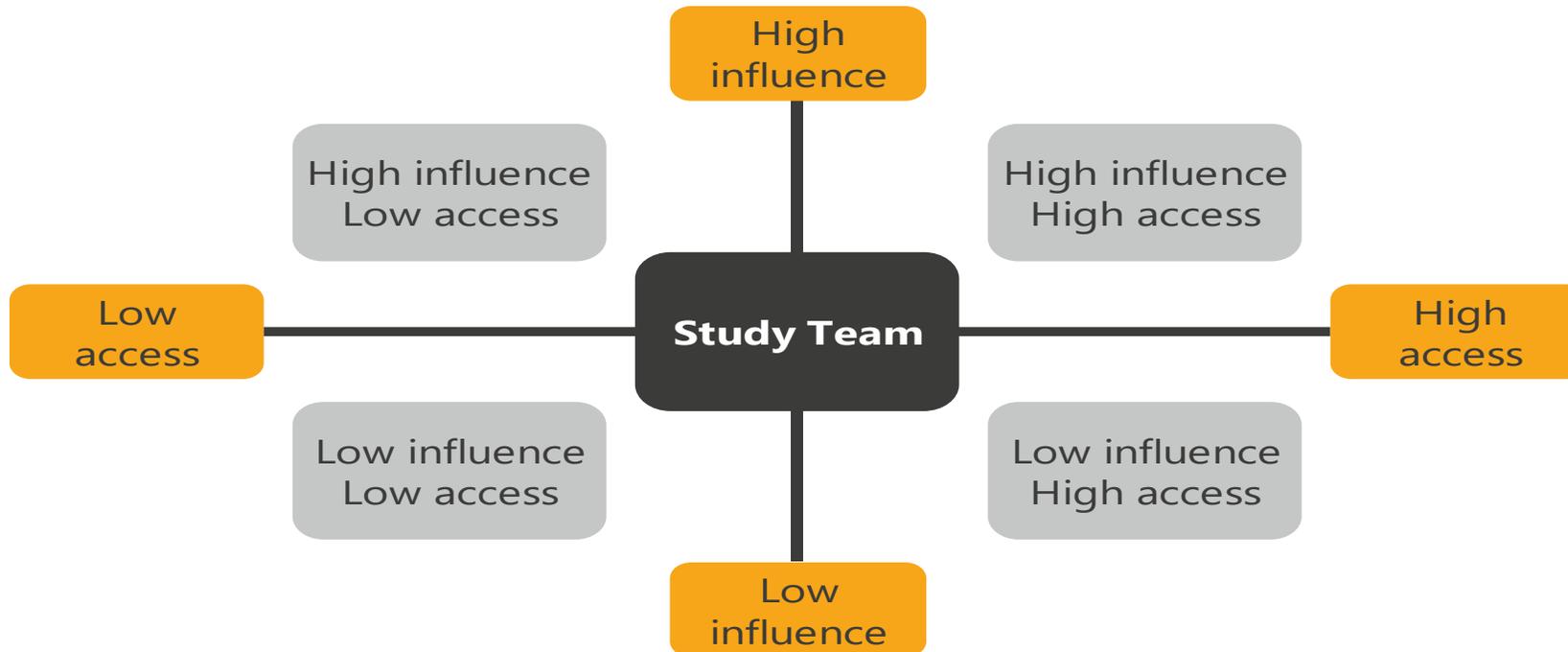


# Key considerations

- Are there opportunities for this study to inform sub-national, national or global policies, legislations and/or guidelines?
- Can the study potentially inform changes to programme design, implementation and/or budgets?
- If the study involves working with an implementing agency, can the study potentially inform the agency's programme monitoring and evaluation frameworks and indicators? Can it inform the agency's evaluation culture?
- Can the study potentially inform funding decisions of donors?

# Stakeholder mapping and analysis

Use a tool that works for you



# Be clear about definitions

## **Influence**

Audiences (people and entities) willing and having the ability to influence:  
attitudes, norms or behaviours  
policy or programme design  
successful implementation of programme or evaluation

## **Access**

Audiences (people and entities) you have access to

# Tips for stakeholder mapping

- Think about who should be involved and what info you need
- Map networks: make connecting lines between stakeholders, map formal and informal dynamics and relationships
- Use different colours to circle those who may be against the project or evaluation and those who benefit
- Map different levels and types of stakeholders, but avoid broad categories
- Mapping pre-cursor to analysis – Tripe A framework
- Software for doing stakeholder mapping: Group map, Mind tools, google docs

# Stakeholder mapping and analysis

Use a tool that works for you



# Risks to evidence use



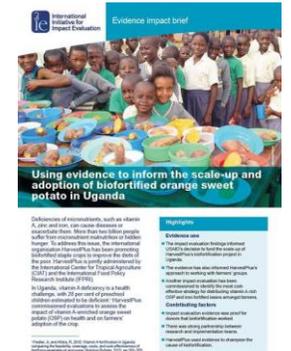
- Maintain a live risk register that is shared with the team – assess impact and work on mitigation strategies
- Carry out scenario planning
- Engage regularly with stakeholders to figure out their changing needs, interests, challenges



# Building an engagement and communication plan

# Examples of communication channels and products

- Advisory and working groups
- **Virtual** and non-virtual events
- Website
- Policy briefs
- Infographics
- Plain language summaries
- Multimedia
- Blogs and social media
- Traditional media
- Newsletters and list serves



# Key considerations

- Have you engaged with a diverse set of relevant stakeholders for developing the scope of the study, research questions, planning implementation, defining outcomes of interest?
- Does your team include expertise in knowledge translation and communication?
- Have you set aside the budget – money and person days?
- Have you planned engagement and communication based on stakeholder needs and interests?

# Monitoring and evaluation

## Expect to see (output indicators)

E.g. Number of paper, briefs published, web and social media analytics, number of presentations.

## Like to see (outcome indicators)

E.g. Number of citations, media mentions, stakeholder invitations to discuss study, uptake of innovative methods

## Love to see (outcome indicators)

E.g. Study findings used to inform policies, programmes, guidelines, funding decisions, decision to commission another study

# Tips for monitoring and evaluation

- Include both quantitative and qualitative indicators that are measurable
- Keep a flexible and adaptive approach – your definition of success may change
- Collect documentary proof to make your evidence use claim verifiable





# Quarterly reports

## Stakeholder engagement and evidence use

- Summarise interactions with key stakeholders
- Report on evidence uptake and use based on indicators you have chosen- provide links, supporting documentation and a narrative
- Challenges, risks and opportunities
- Forward planning

# CEDIL support for your efforts

- Be sure to tag us on social media channels so that we can amplify your efforts - [@CEDILProgramme](https://twitter.com/CEDILProgramme) on Twitter
- Email us if you would like to present as part of the CEDIL lecture series
- Email us if you would like to blog for the CEDIL site or cross-post from your site





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