Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE): what worked? Lessons from the evaluation

Link

1

This was the starting assumption behind BCURE.
The evaluation investigated how, why and for whom capacity building worked and didn't work across the BCURE projects.

"Evidence is crucial to successful policy making. However, in many low and middle-income countries, policy makers lack the capacity to effectively access, appraise and apply research when making decisions."

2

In order to build capacity for evidence use we found
three 'ways of working' that underpined success in BCURE:

Thinking and working politically
Programmes need to understand the political and power dynamics that affect evidence use in government.

Accompanying rather than imposing change
BCURE was more successful when partners 'accompanied' government partners through a flexible, tailored, collaborative approach that promoted ownership.

Working at multiple levels of the system
Individual capacity is the bedrock for effective evidence-informed policy making – but programmes also need to strengthen systems, develop tools, and nurture champions.

3

The BCURE partners took **three broad entry points** - or impact pathways - to working with government on evidence-informed policy making.

| Single ministry or unit | Across government | Parliament |

4

Across the three impact pathways, success followed when BCURE managed to activate a combination of 'mechanisms' (change processes). These led to changes in skills, attitudes, behaviour and systems, which laid the foundations for more routine use of evidence in government.

Self-efficacy
Example: In Zimbabwe, training built officials' confidence to use evidence in the Ministry of Youth, helping them work more effectively in their new roles as officers in a recently-established research unit.

Critical Mass
Example: In Kenya, officials in the Ministry of Health cascaded their learning from BCURE through adapting the training curriculum, mobilising financial support from a separate funder, and training county level policy makers in evidence-informed policy making.

Reinforcement
Example: In Sierra Leone, BCURE supported new Cabinet-level processes and templates, making it mandatory for line ministries to consider evidence in policy submissions. A new unit with the mandate to follow up on implementation created further pressure to comply.

Showcasing
Example: In South Africa, BCURE helped produce an 'evidence map' that gathered together diverse sources relating to human settlements. Learning was shared through reports and workshops, leading to demand for further maps by various ministries.

Adoption
Example: In Bangladesh, BCURE piloted an evidence training course that was adopted nationally and will reach thousands of civil servants each year. BCURE also co-developed evidence-informed policy making guidelines, which have been adopted by Cabinet with the intention of rolling them out across all government ministries.

Facilitation
Example: In Pakistan, BCURE developed data visualisation tools to help front line service providers understand what was happening on the ground – for example a dashboard showing tax collection by area, which helped officials manage staffing and performance.

Civil society and the media use evidence in their engagement with government and call for greater evidence use

Individuals have strengthened skills, knowledge and commitment to access, appraise, communicate and use evidence

Tools are developed that help officials use evidence effectively in their work

Officials routinely consider a range of evidence and its quality in the development of policy

Senior managers are championing the use of evidence and resourcing the use of evidence

Evidence (directly and indirectly) influences policy decisions

Networks and relationships are strengthened between evidence producers and government officials

Policy development processes exist that ensure engagement with evidence from different stakeholders and multiple perspectives

Systems and processes are in place that incentivise, reinforce and monitor the use of evidence

Outer circle represents outcomes that are important to drive routine evidence use, but were not a core focus of the evaluation