

# MODULE 1 FOUNDATION

**Evidence-Informed Policy  
Making Training**



# MODULE 1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module participants will:

- Define the terms & role of evidence in policy making
- Describe the importance & value of evidence informed policy making
- Identify barriers & facilitators of evidence informed decision-making
- Describe context & sources of information that influence policy making
- List steps involved in making policy
- Identify tactics for reaching policymakers in the right way & at the right time
- Know & demonstrate how to draft a policy question

BRAINSTORM

# HOW DO YOU DEFINE...

- Data
- Evidence
- Policy
- Decision-making
- EIPM



Source: <https://pixabay.com/en/thinker-thinking-person-idea-28741/>

# DEFINITION

## *Data*

- Factual information (as measurements or statistics) used as a basis for reasoning, discussion, or calculation

Source: Merriam Webster

- Facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis.

Synonyms: facts, figures, statistics, details, particulars, specifics

Source: Google

# DEFINITION

## *Evidence*

The available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid.

Source: Oxford English Dictionary

# TYPES OF INFORMATION/ EVIDENCE USED IN POLICY-MAKING

- Systematic reviews (vs single studies)
- Evaluations
- Pilot studies
- Case studies
- Expert advice
- Information from practice & implementation
- Citizen reports
- Media

# DEFINITION

Policies are part of a larger process that aims to align country priorities with the real health needs..., generate buy-in across government, and partners, and make better use of all available resources

Adapted from WHO, Why are national health policies, strategies and plans important?

## *Policy*

A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual.

Source: Oxford Dictionary

## *Decision-making*

The process of examining possibilities and options, comparing them, & choosing a course of action

Source: Wikipedia

# DEFINITION

“Best available” may not include rigorous scientific research or evaluation

*EIPM:*

- Approach that aims to ensure that decision-making is well-informed by the **best available** evidence. It is characterized by systematic and transparent access to, and appraisal of, evidence as an input into policy-making.

Source: Lavis, et al. (2009). SUPPORT tools for evidence-informed health policy making

- Evidence-informed policy provides an effective mechanism to establish in a scientifically valid way, what works or does not work, and for whom it works or does not work.

Source: Sutcliffe, S. & Court, J. (2005). ODI Evidence-Based Policymaking: What is it? How does it work?



# DEFINITION



Why not  
“evidence-based  
policy”?

## *EIPM*

- The term **evidence-based** policy is used in the literature, yet largely related to only one type of evidence – research. Using the term “**evidence-influenced or evidence-informed**” reflects the need to be context sensitive and consider use of the best available evidence when dealing with everyday circumstances.

-Source: Bowen S & Zwi A. (2005). Pathways to “evidence-informed” policy and practice: A framework for action.

# DEFINITION

EIPM -- More on why “evidence-informed”

Evidence, in this definition, could be derived from research, citizens and stakeholders, and from practice and implementation.

Evidence informed policy is not based exclusively on research evidence or on one set of findings. This terminology allows for the reality that sometimes research findings are considered and rejected; but the resulting policy was still evidence-informed.

GROUP DISCUSSION

# LOCAL EXAMPLES OF EIPM

1. In 3 groups identify & discuss your experiences & examples from work of evidence-informed decisions or policy-making [10 min]
2. Report back to full group [3 min each group]

# EVIDENCE-INFORMED POLICY MAKING

Why do we care?

Why do we want it?

How does it help us?

# EVIDENCE IN POLICY MAKING HELPS...

- Make good investment decisions
- Increase efficiency in performance & service
- Strengthen programs & improve results
- Ensure accountability & reporting
- Improve quality of services provided
- Ascertain the acceptability of a policy to stakeholders

# EVIDENCE IN POLICY MAKING HELPS... (CONTINUED)

- Explain need for certain decisions or impetus for actions
- Show reasons for choosing one of many competing arguments
- Increase confidence in decisions that are eventually made
- Help build consensus
- Raise additional resources
- Show effectiveness of policy & relationship between risks & benefits

# WHAT IS EVIDENCE APPLICATION ANYWAY?

Where would you see evidence applied at work?

What does it look like?



It's not just official policies...

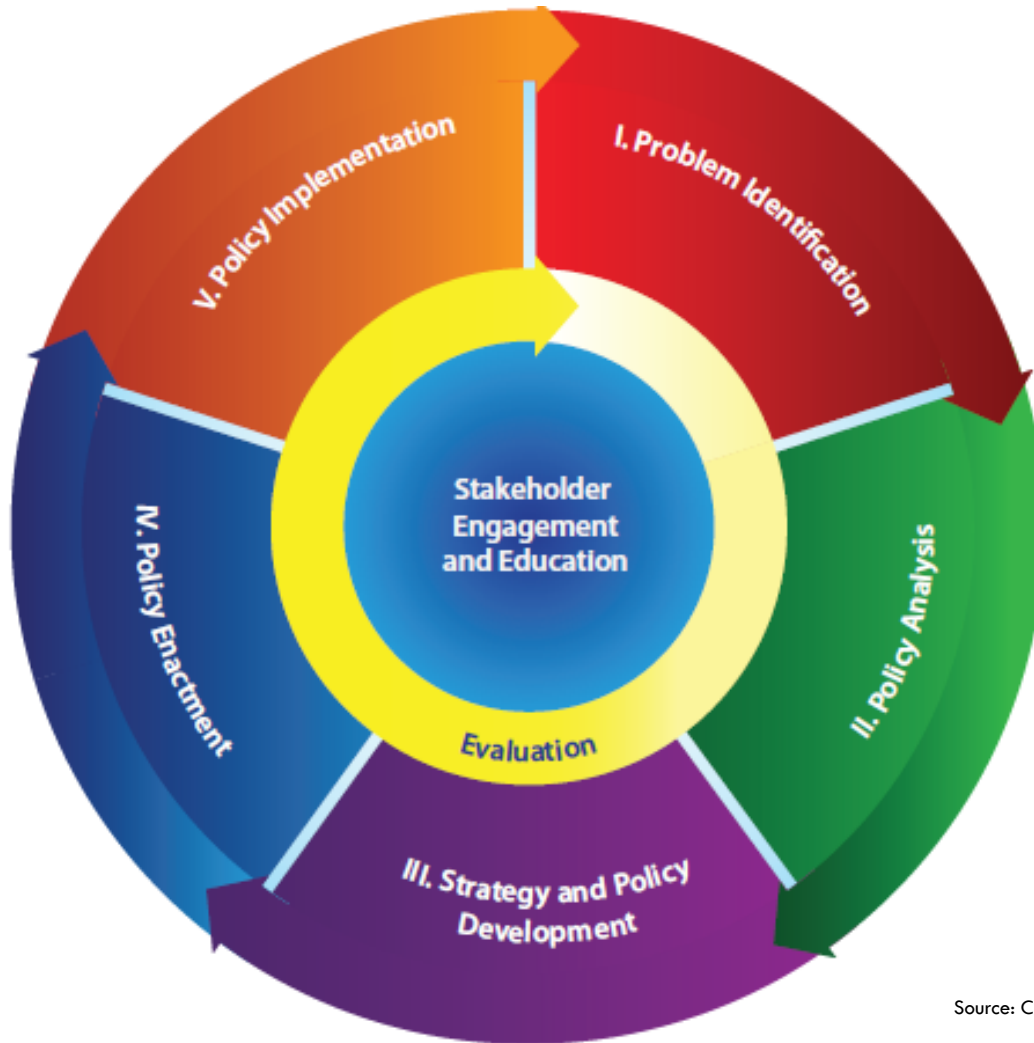
# EXAMPLES OF APPLIED EVIDENCE

- New or amended policies
- Recommendations adopted by implementers
- Guidelines, resources, job aids revised reflecting evidence
- Influencing upstream policy dialogue
- Inclusion on technical working group agenda or other key meetings
- Changes in level of funding
- Changes made to program or services
- Scale up of intervention or program



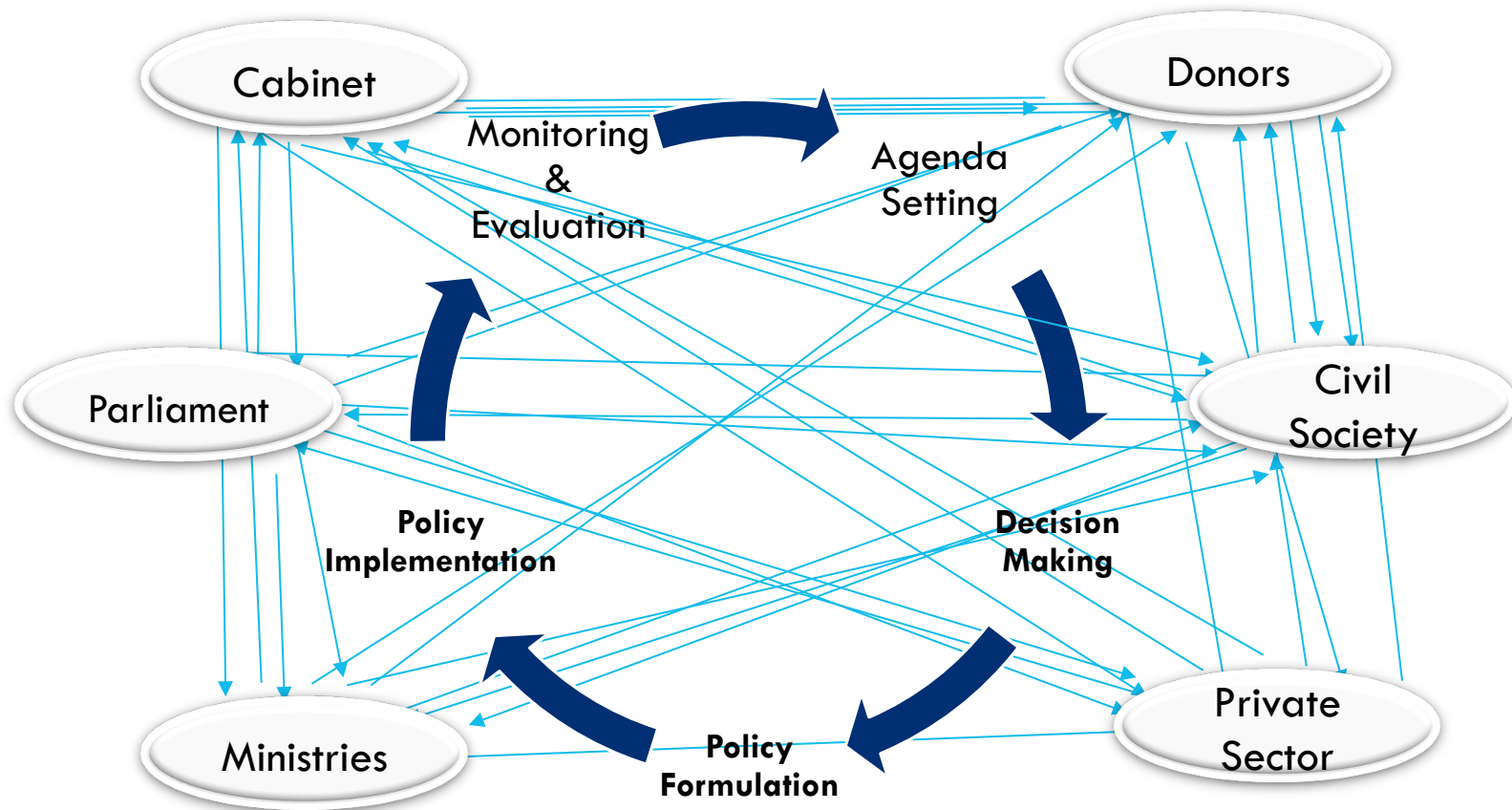
# CONTEXT OF POLICY MAKING

This is the policy process



Straight forward?

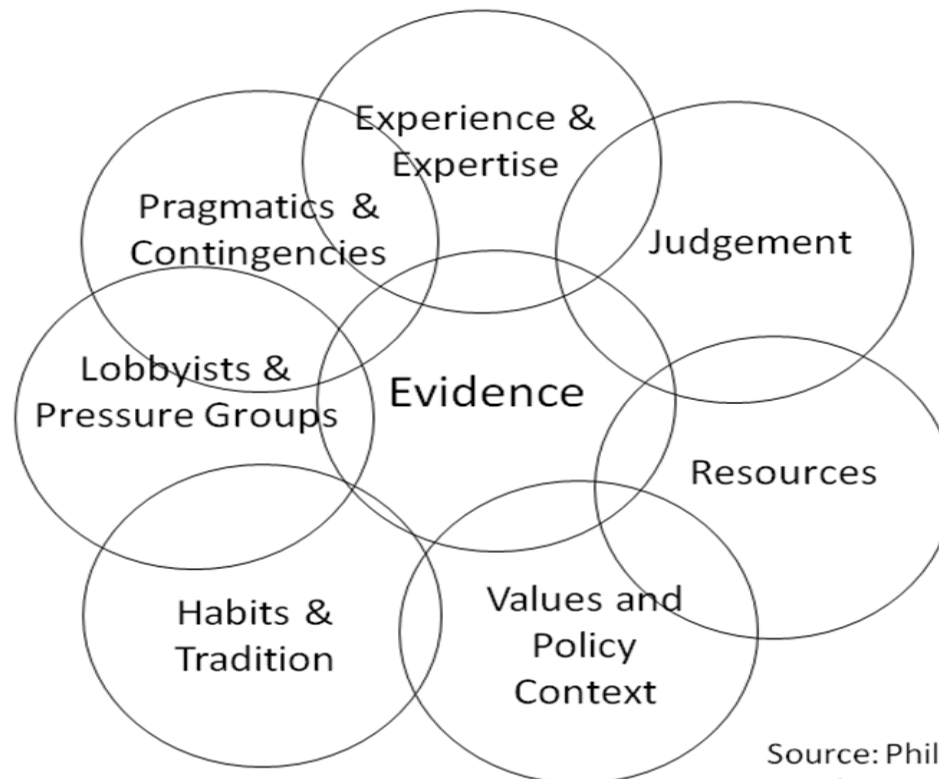
# POLICY MAKING IS COMPLEX!



# WHAT HAPPENS TO EVIDENCE IN THIS CONTEXT?



There are many factors



Source: Phil Davies Impact to Insight Meeting, ODI, 2005

# EVIDENCE NEEDS AT THE 4 STAGES OF POLICY-MAKING

Refer to Handout #3

# STEPS IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- How does it happen in your country or organization?
- Is there guidance for policy development?
- What steps are likely to be common among different countries or organizations?

# STEPS IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT



Similar or  
different to  
our list?  
Linear in real  
life?

1. Identify a policy issue
2. Preliminary considerations before starting development
3. Assemble a policy development team
4. Identify/analyze problems and issues to be addressed in new/  
revised policy
5. Conduct stakeholder analysis to be involved
6. Set goals and objectives of the envisioned policy
7. Identify policy options to achieve the goals and objectives  
Develop a comprehensive set of options. This requires research  
evidence, particularly evidence from systematic reviews, best  
practices, and local evidence on what works

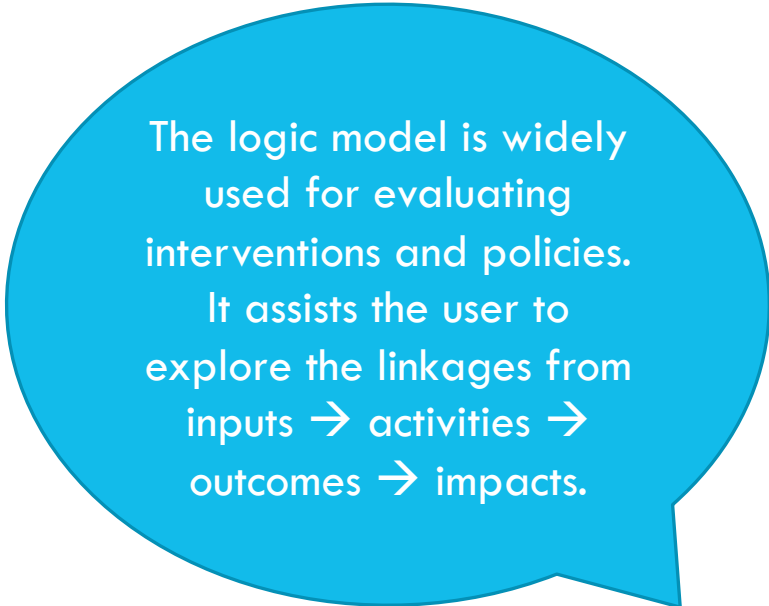
# STEPS IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT(CONT'D)

## 8. Appraise & select policy options

Critically evaluate each policy option by comparing the relative merits associated with each possible policy option, including: costs, benefits, risks, and other relevant impacts.

Establish evaluation criteria:

- Effectiveness
- Acceptability
- Feasibility
- Capabilities & capacity
- Political will
- Sustainability
- Evaluability



The logic model is widely used for evaluating interventions and policies. It assists the user to explore the linkages from inputs → activities → outcomes → impacts.

# STEPS IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT (CONT'D)

## 9. Appraise & select policy options

Strive to answer the following questions when appraising policy options:

- Consistent with current government priorities, existing laws, regulations, and policies? With regional and international standards/policies and conventions?
- Require new or revised laws or regulations?
- Gender-sensitive? Does it cover vulnerable populations?
- Sensitive to human rights?
- Acceptable to key stakeholders, including political leadership, professional associations, beneficiaries, & implementers, among others?



# STEPS IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT (CONT'D)

9. Draft the policy
10. Deliberate draft policy with stakeholders
11. Validate & obtain official endorsement
12. Launch & implement policy
13. Monitor, evaluate, learn & revise policy as needed



**“Laws are like sausages. You  
should never watch them being  
made.”**

Otto von Bismarck

GROUP DISCUSSION

# BARRIERS & FACILITATORS

Using the examples of policymaking processes in Handout 1 (adolescent reproductive health policy & Malaria treatment policy in Kenya) in your Participant's Guide, discuss barriers & facilitators for using evidence in 'the real world'

- What are examples from your work?
- What barriers prevent evidence use?
- What facilitates evidence use?

# BARRIERS FACILITATORS

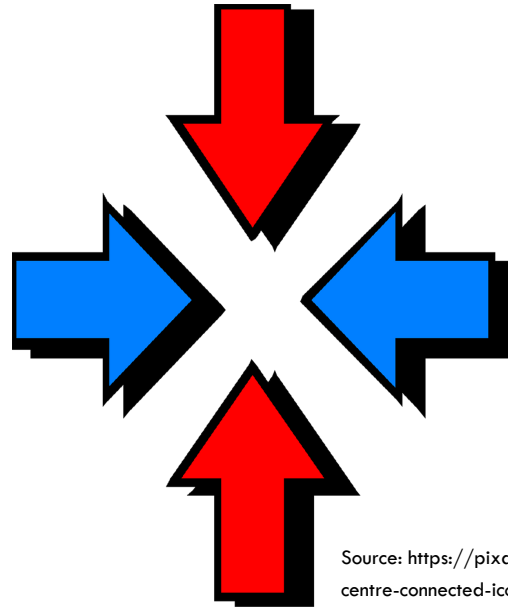
- Lack of available research or evidence
- Lack of relevant research or evidence
- No time, opportunity, mandate to use evidence
- Insufficient skill in understanding strength of evidence/research methods
- Insufficient funds
- Access to research or evidence
- Improved dissemination of evidence
- Strong & relevant implementation findings
- Policy makers who believe other evidence must balance expert opinion
- Strong advocates for research
- Partnerships: policy maker & researcher

GROUP DISCUSSION

# BARRIERS & FACILITATORS

- What distinctions are there between *political* and *technical* barriers and facilitators?
- With regard to facilitators, do any appear to be “low hanging fruit” or relatively easy/accessible solutions to evidence use in policy making?

# POLICY WINDOWS AND REACHING POLICY MAKERS



Source: <https://pixabay.com/en/arrow-play-centre-connected-icon-1217940/>

# POLICY WINDOW DEFINITION

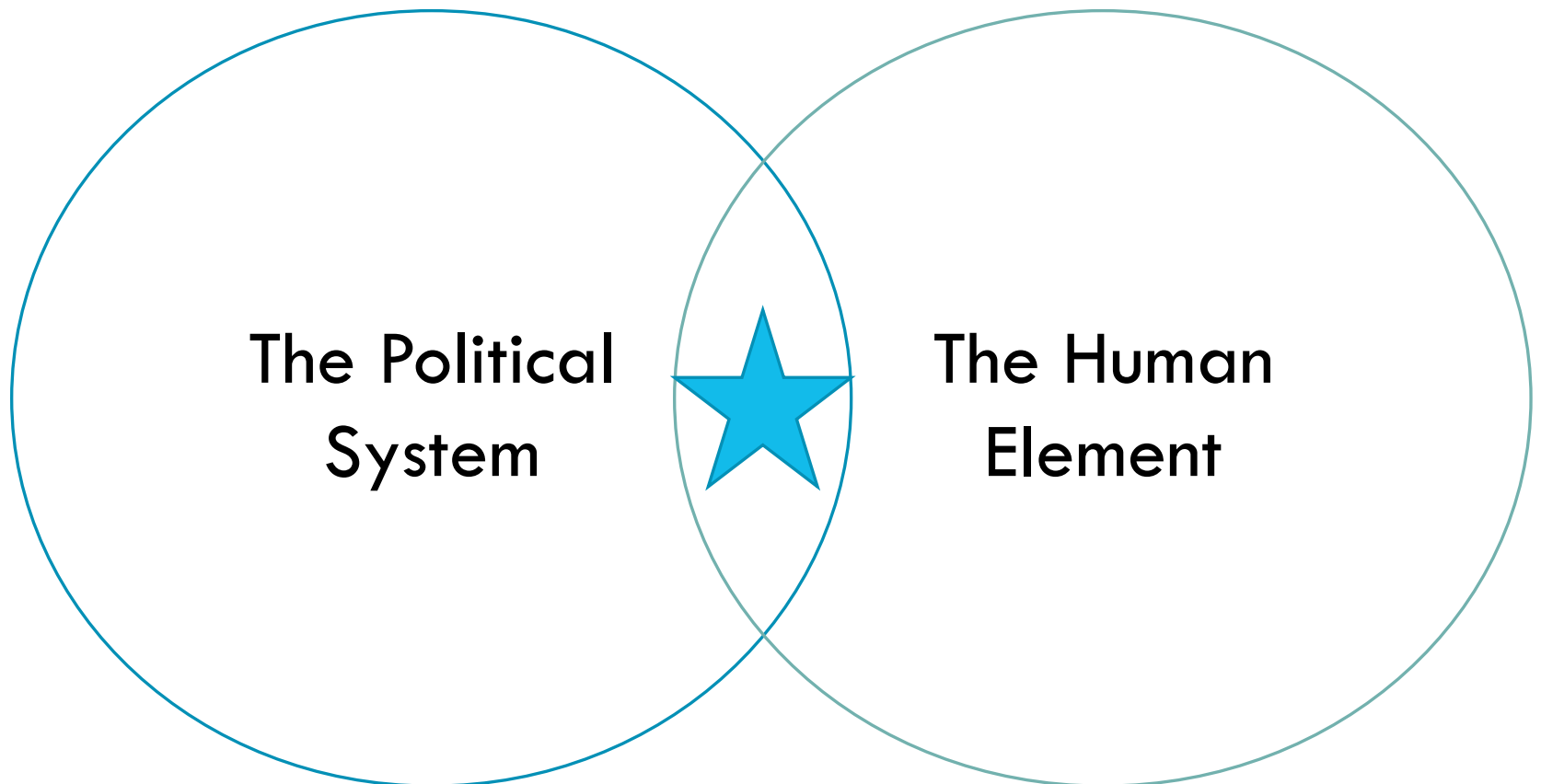
The policy window is the point at which policy issues move onto the government agenda and toward decision and action.

--John Kingdon, Public Policy Analyst, University of Michigan



OK, and how do  
we get to that  
point?

# TWO DOMAINS INVOLVED IN CREATING A POLICY WINDOW AND REACHING POLICY MAKERS





# DOMAIN 1: THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

- Bodies of government,
- Roles of parliament and civil service,
- How laws are made

Understand the structures and roles where you intend to have influence.

On your topic of interest:

- Any special policy processes?
- Relevant teams responsible
- Devolved to local bodies?

# DOMAIN 2: THE HUMAN ELEMENT

Policy making is about people -and ideas, but mostly people.

It is essential to cultivate relationships and opportunities.

- Policymakers have different ways they like to be contacted.
- Take time to know their background and preferences

# HUMAN ELEMENT CONTINUED



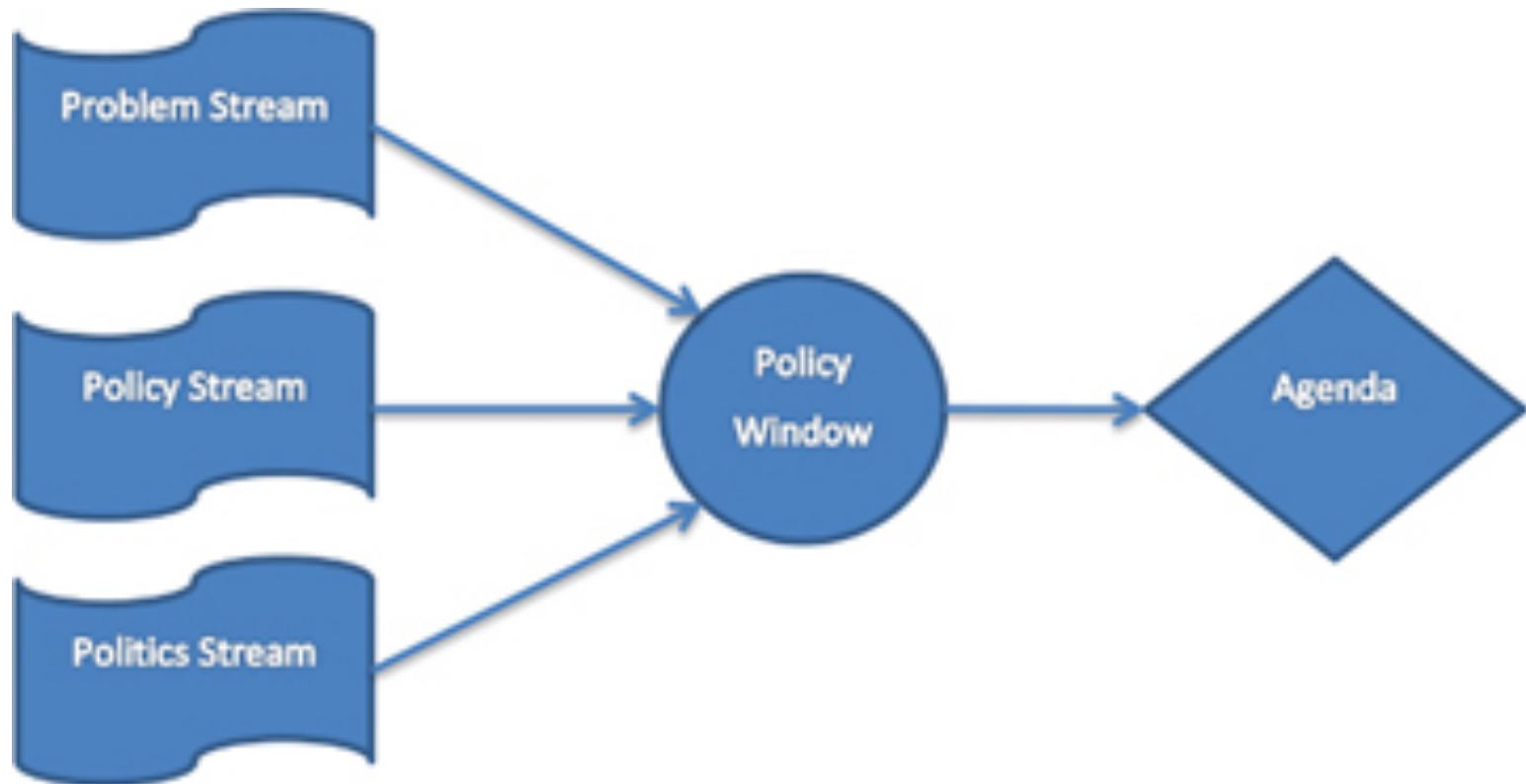
“Policymakers believe that the most important contributions scholars [and experts] can make are ... as **informal advisors** or creators of new knowledge. However, severe time constraints limit their ability to use such scholarship in any but its’ very briefest presentation.”

Source: Mendizabal, E. (2014). *What do policymakers want?*

—  
One systematic review of how evidence and information influence decision-makers found that **the absence of personal contact** between researchers and policymakers and **the lack of timeliness** or relevance of research were the most common constraints.

Source: Innvaer, S. (2002). *Health policy-makers’ perceptions of their use of evidence: a systematic review.*

# KINGDON'S POLICY WINDOW MODEL



# KINGDON'S POLICY WINDOW CONTINUED

- The **problem stream** - is condition considered a problem?
  - Problem defined, focus, call for change, attention from data/events
- The **policy stream** - are there programs or solutions to implement?
  - Alternatives generated. Administrators, researchers, academics play a big role. Feasibility gauged. Solutions and consensus emerge.
- The **political stream** - are politicians willing and able to make a policy change?
  - Agenda formed. Government resolution to resolve. Bandwagon effect.

GROUP DISCUSSION

# COMMENTS ON THE 3- STREAMS THEORY?

What's your take on the model?

Where do you/evidence come in?

*“There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.”*

- Victor Hugo

# DEFINING & DEVELOPING A POLICY QUESTION

adopted for the  
expediency, fa  
**pol·i·cy** - a c  
adopted and  
government, ru  
action of

What is a  
policy  
question?

Source: <http://its.unl.edu/desktop/policies-governing-client-management-tool-use>

# A POLICY QUESTION IS...

- A question of what needs to be done to respond to a specific public issue. (You might also consider this a policy statement.)
  - A question that generates information for addressing or responding to a specific public policy issue/concern.
  - A way to clarify what evidence you need to search for.
- 
- For example: How can we address the frequent cholera outbreaks in community X?



# QUESTIONS IN HEALTH POLICY MAY FOCUS ON...

- A risk factor, disease or condition
- Programs, services or drugs currently being used to address a condition
- Current health system arrangements within which interventions are provided
- Current degree of implementation of an agreed upon course of action (e.g. a policy or guideline)

# RESEARCH QUESTION VERSUS POLICY QUESTION

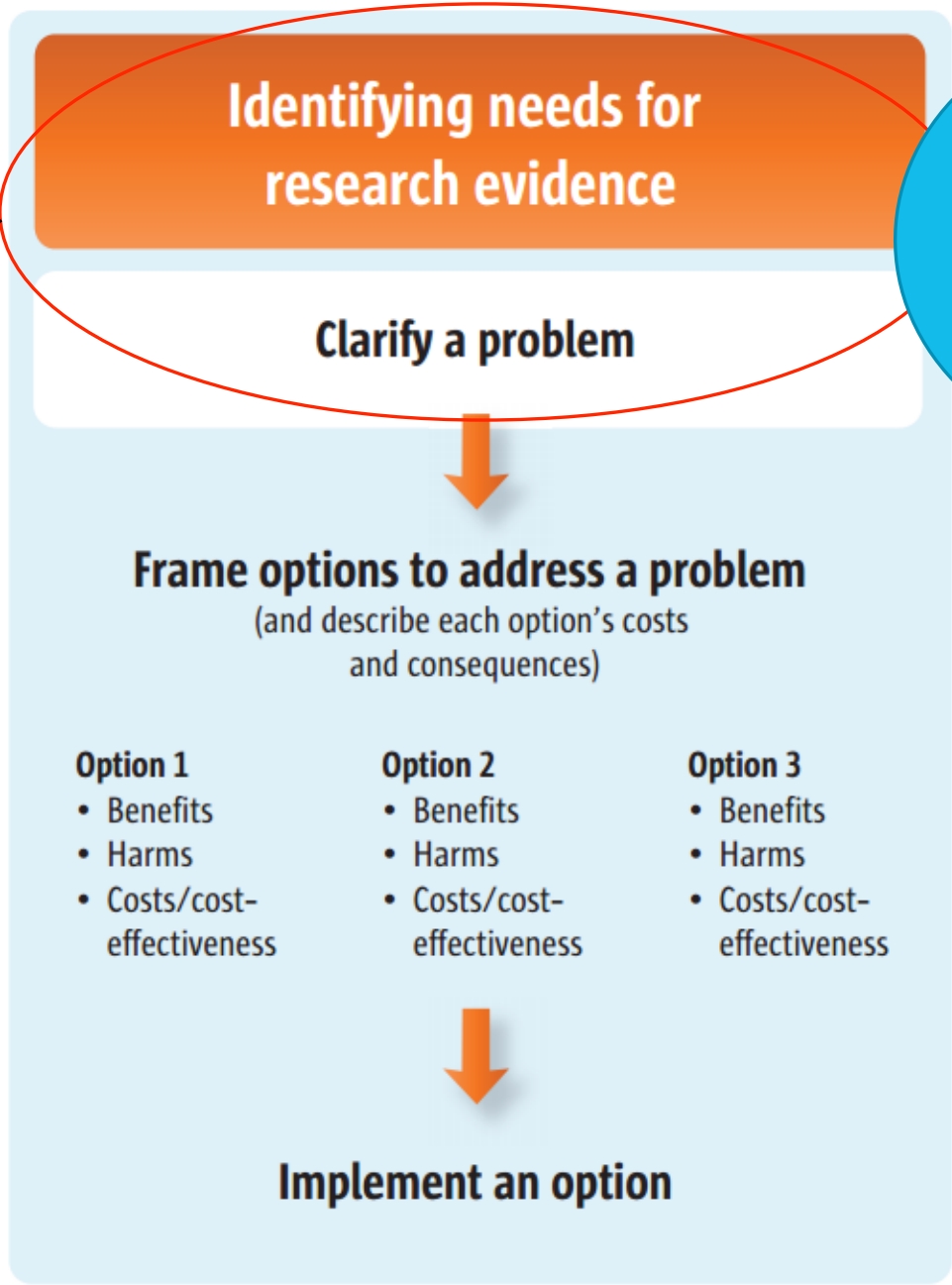
What is the difference between them?

# RESEARCH VS POLICY QUESTION

- Research question generates information for understanding/explaining a phenomenon
- A policy question generates information for addressing or responding to a specific public policy issue/concern
- Policy questions are often broader than research questions – a policy question often has more than one research question
- A policy question moves the research to the next level – what to do with the new research evidence? (*the so what question?*)

# EXAMPLES: RESEARCH & POLICY QUESTIONS


Research Question	Policy Question
What factors explain the lack of progress in reducing maternal mortality in country Z?	In what ways can the maternal health program in country Z be improved to reduce maternal deaths?
Why is community X susceptible to frequent cholera outbreaks?	How can we address the frequent cholera outbreaks in community X?
What is the nexus between policy and practice when implementing community health strategy?	How effective is the implementation of the community health strategy/guidelines?
How are communities and non-state actors contributing to TB control in Malawi?	How can we improve the involvement of communities and non-state actors in TB control?



Lavis, J., Wilson, M., Oxman, A., et al. (2009). *SUPPORT tools for evidence-informed health policymaking (STP) 4: using research to clarify a problem.*  
<http://www.health-policy-systems.com/content/pdf/1478-4505-7-S1-S4.pdf>

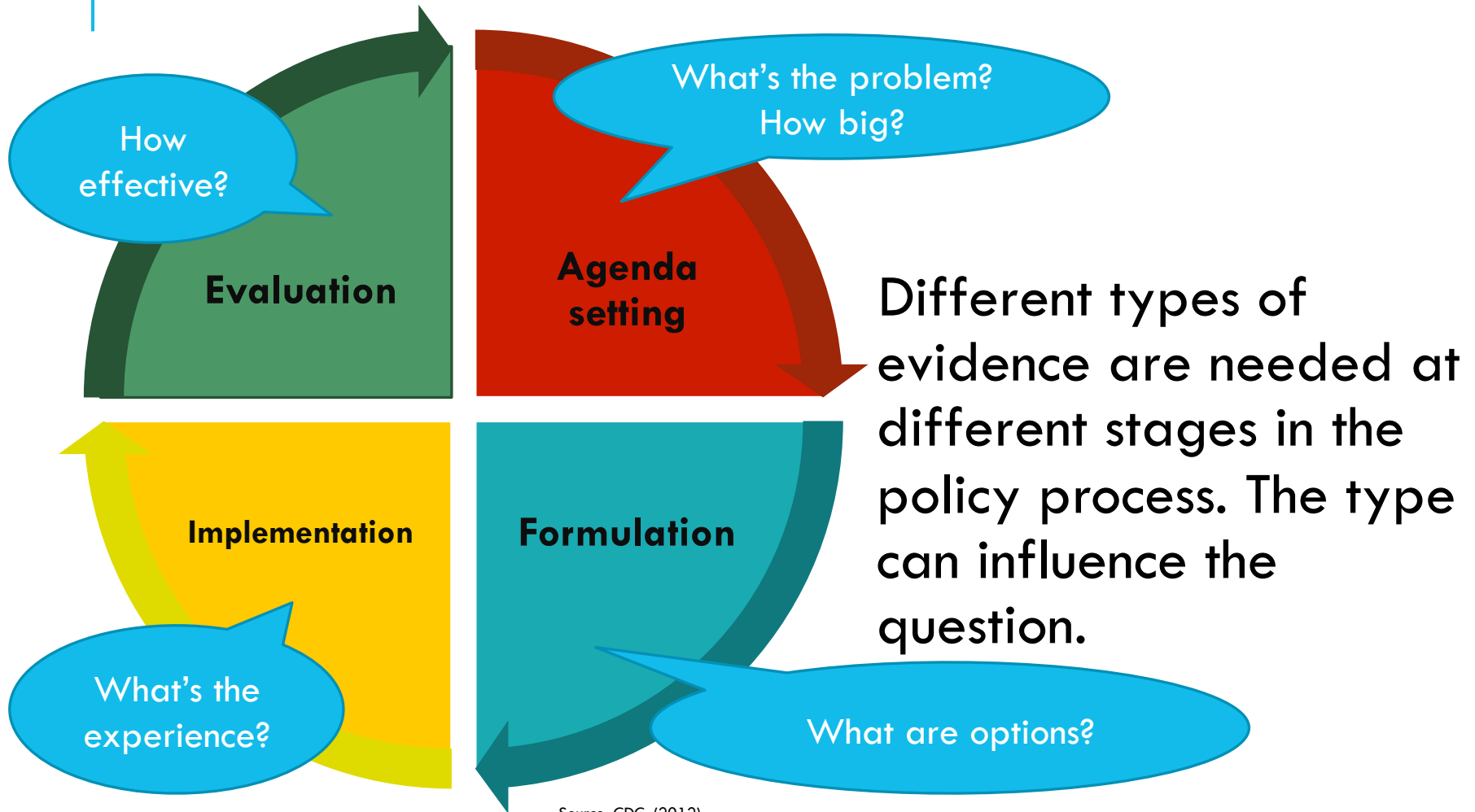
# STEPS FOR DEVELOPING A POLICY QUESTION

1. Identify policy issue. What specific concern does MoH/Parliament want to address?
  - Ineffective interventions/programs? Lack of existing policy for a neglected/emerging issue? Inadequate investments?
2. Frame a question that generates evidence for addressing the issue. Try starting your question with:
  - In what ways can X be improved to...
  - How can we address the...
  - How effective is the...
3. Expect an iterative process.
  - As you determine the different components relevant to your question and situation, the question may change.
  - The stage in policy process also a factor



Is your policy question framed like this?

# EVIDENCE NEED/POLICY QUESTION BY STAGE IN PROCESS



# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS BY STAGE: AGENDA SETTING

Stage of the policy process	Description	Evidence issues	Example questions
<b>Agenda setting</b>	Prioritizing an issue and raising awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a comprehensive understanding of the specific situation before proceeding with formulation</li> <li>• Key considerations include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ links between activities and outcomes</li> <li>○ projected intervention cost</li> <li>○ projected intervention impact</li> <li>○ quantity of evidence</li> <li>○ credibility of evidence</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are priorities for new strategic plan?</li> <li>▪ What is magnitude of problem?</li> <li>▪ Which focus areas or populations for new policies?</li> <li>▪ Which geographic areas of highest need?</li> </ul> <p>(adapted from Sutcliffe, S, ODI, 2005)</p>



# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS BY STAGE: FORMULATION

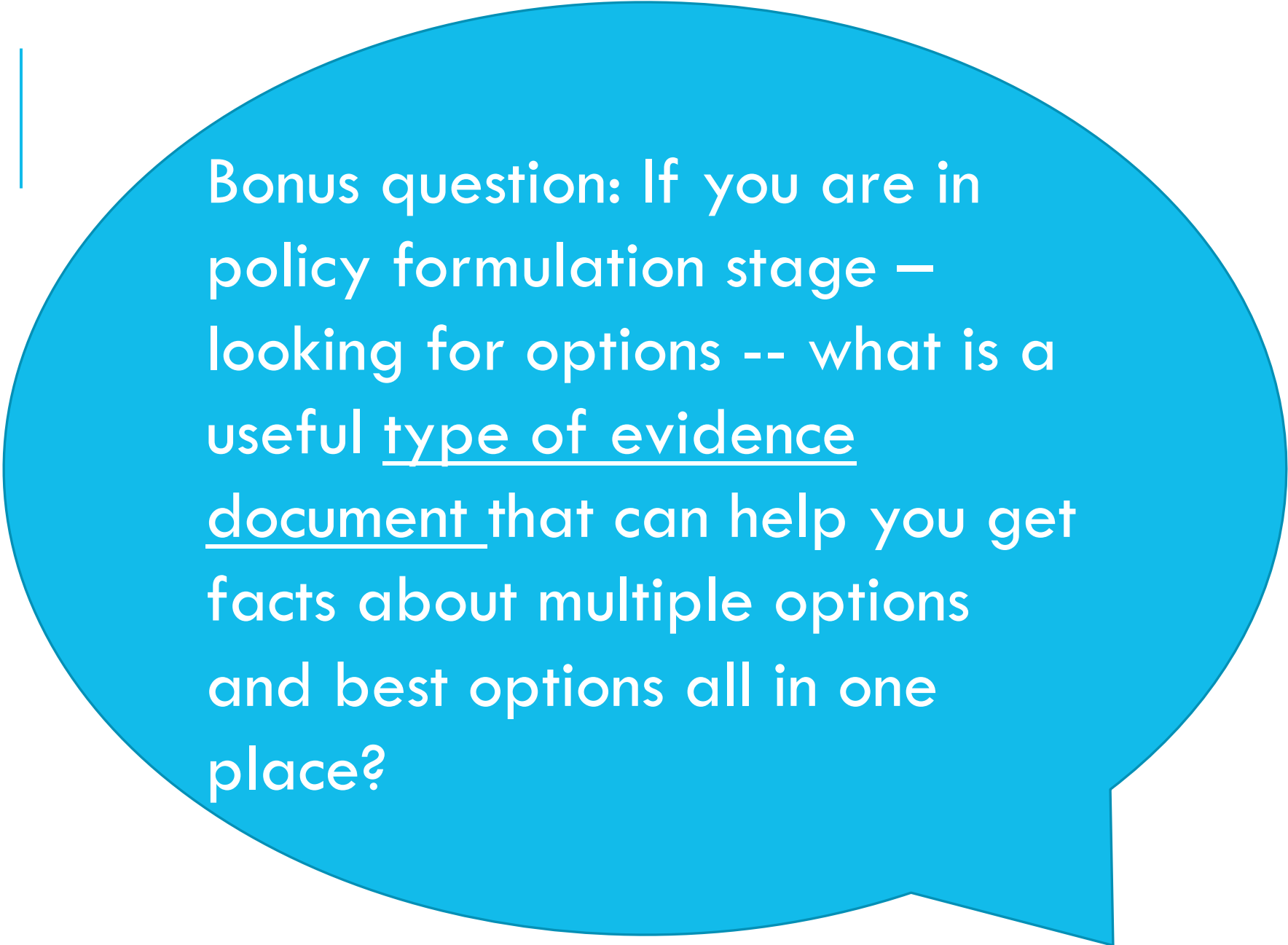
Stage of the policy process	Description	Evidence issues	Example questions
<b>Formulation</b>	1) Determining the policy options 2) Selecting the preferred option*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use evidence to identify new problems or the magnitude of a problem</li><li>• Emphasize the importance of a problem to relevant policy actors using evidence</li><li>• Ensure the evidence is 1) credible, and 2) effectively communicated</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Which services would make the greatest impact?</li><li>▪ Details of options? Options comprehensive? Cost?</li><li>▪ What are options/ interventions?</li><li>▪ Which options are best?</li></ul> <p>(adapted from Sutcliff, S, ODI, 2005)</p>

# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS BY STAGE: IMPLEMENTATION

Stage of the policy process	Description	Evidence issues	Example questions
<b>Implementation</b>	Practical activity actualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve implementation effectiveness through operational evidence</li> <li>• Ensure the evidence is relevant to practical application in various contexts. Examples include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ analytic work</li><li>○ systematic learning around technical skills expert knowledge</li><li>○ practical skills</li><li>○ action research</li><li>○ pilot projects</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What's the practical experience?</li> <li>▪ How to improve initiative? Operations?</li> <li>▪ What are the information needs for specific context or campaigns?</li></ul> <p>(adapted from Sutcliff, S, ODI, 2005)</p>

# EXAMPLE QUESTIONS BY STAGE: EVALUATION

Stage of the policy process	Description	Evidence issues	Example questions
<b>Evaluation</b>	Monitoring and assessing the process and impact of an intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop monitoring mechanisms first</li> <li>• Implement a comprehensive evaluation procedure to determine the implemented policy's effectiveness</li> <li>• Use M&amp;E to ensure objective, thorough, and relevant evidence</li> <li>• Communicate M&amp;E results to effectively inform the continuing policy process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Which strategies increase impact of specific services? Is program meeting its process objectives? – e.g., training the stated number of providers</li> <li>▪ How to increase coverage of program? What learnings to apply?</li> <li>▪ Is policy effective?</li> </ul> <p>(adapted from Sutcliffe, S, ODI, 2005)</p>



Bonus question: If you are in policy formulation stage – looking for options -- what is a useful type of evidence document that can help you get facts about multiple options and best options all in one place?

# SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS!

...because they help to:

- assess and rank interventions on the basis of effectiveness and cost-effectiveness
- show where interventions have been applied
- provide the relative cost of interventions
- indicate the strength of evidence on an agreed scale

# CASE STUDY – POLICY QUESTION

Read  
me

## Integrating Family Planning into HIV Programs: Evidence-Based Practices

A favorable policy environment for family planning and HIV integration has emerged, the evidence base for the effective integration of services is growing, and a broad array of guidance documents and tools are available to support integrated programming.

### What is family planning and HIV integration?

The integration of family planning (FP) and HIV services improves sexual and reproductive health outcomes by providing both services under one programmatic umbrella. This type of integration refers to the delivery of health services, and it is a subset of closely related but broader linkages between family planning and HIV funding, programs, and advocacy.<sup>1</sup>

### Background

Historically, family planning services and HIV programs have had separate funding streams and independent operational structures. Over the last decade, however, the global health community has endorsed stronger linkages between family planning and HIV policies, programs, and services. These linkages are essential to meet the needs of women and their families and to achieve international development goals, such as universal access to reproductive health services and greater access to reproductive health services.

The unmet need for family planning and the HIV epidemic are driven by similar causes, including poverty, poor access to healthcare, gender inequality, and the marginalization of vulnerable populations (AMG 2010). Clients seeking HIV services and those seeking reproductive health and family planning services also share many common needs and concerns. Indeed, countries with the greatest burden of HIV also have high levels of unmet need for family planning, and many women are simultaneously at risk for both unintended pregnancy and HIV acquisition. The "widespread integration" of family planning and HIV remains an unmet need (Ringheim 2009).

Integrating family planning services into HIV programs can increase access to family planning services among clients of HIV services who wish to delay, space, or limit births. Integration can also help to ensure a safe and healthy pregnancy and delivery for those who wish to have a child. For women living with HIV who wish to become pregnant, family planning is an evidence-based, cost-effective strategy for preventing unintended pregnancies and for reducing new pediatric HIV infections (Reynolds 2008).

Family planning services can be integrated at several HIV service delivery points, including counseling and testing, prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), and antiretroviral therapy (ART) (Reynolds 2008).

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from definitions for "integration" and "linkages" in the Strategic Considerations for Strengthening the Linkages between Family Planning and HIV/AIDS Policies, Programs, and Services (WHO, USAID, FHI 2009).



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## Session 2 Foundation: Developing a Policy Question

### Background

The integration of family planning (FP) and HIV services improves sexual and reproductive health outcomes by providing both services under one programmatic umbrella. This type of integration refers to the delivery of health services, and it is a subset of closely related but broader linkages between family planning and HIV policies, funding, programs, and advocacy.

For close to a decade, governments, normative bodies, funders, implementing partners, and communities have issued statements supporting the integration of family planning and HIV policies, programs, and services. As a result, meeting the contraceptive and other reproductive health needs of people living with HIV through the provision of integrated services is a core component of key global health frameworks. Major HIV/AIDS funders such as PEPFAR and The Global Fund increasingly encourage the integration of family planning into programs they support. For example, recent PEPFAR guidance states that "The need for family planning for HIV-positive women who desire to space or limit births is an important component of the preventive care package of services for people living with HIV/AIDS and for women accessing PMTCT services. . . PEPFAR is a strong supporter of linkages between HIV/AIDS and voluntary family planning and [other] reproductive health programs" (PEPFAR Fiscal Year Country Operational Plan (COP) Guidance). At the country level, some government health leaders have established national coordination efforts between reproductive health and family planning departments and HIV departments, which, in turn, have led to measurable progress in policy and practice. At least 16 countries have implemented the *Rapid Assessment Tool for Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV Linkages* to assess the current state of integration and develop action plans for strengthening efforts.

# CASE STUDY – POLICY QUESTION

*Instructions:*

- ✓ *Read the selected paragraphs*
2. *Imagine this scenario: Given the developments described in reading, your superior has asked you to advance FP and HIV integration in your country.*
3. *What policy question can be derived from this directive?*
4. *Discuss as a group*

# CASE STUDY – POLICY QUESTION

Potential answers:

What actions in my country will be the most effective for successfully integrating FP and HIV policies, programs, and services?

Or

What does the evidence base indicate are the best policies and practices to achieve success?



# PRACTICAL APPLICATION EXERCISE 1

Part 1: Refine your policy question [15 min]

Part 2: Share your policy question with the group and receive feedback [45 min]

*Remember: your policy question needs to be answerable with existing research and reports*

# MODULE 1 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session participants will:

- Define the terms and role of evidence in policy making
- Describe the importance and value of evidence informed policy making
- Identify barriers and facilitators of evidence informed decision-making.
- Describe context and sources of information that influence policy making
- List steps involved in making policy
- Identify tactics for reaching policymakers in the right way and at the right time
- Know and demonstrate how to draft a policy question

# MODULE 1 REFLECTION & EVALUATION

- What did you learn that you can use in your work place? What was new?
- What ideas did this session generate for you?
- List tasks or “to-do’s” you want to follow up on later.
- What will you share in a debrief at work?
- Are there sub-topics you want to explore more – or clarify with the facilitator or group?



Source: <https://pixabay.com/en/stones-stacked-balance-842731/>