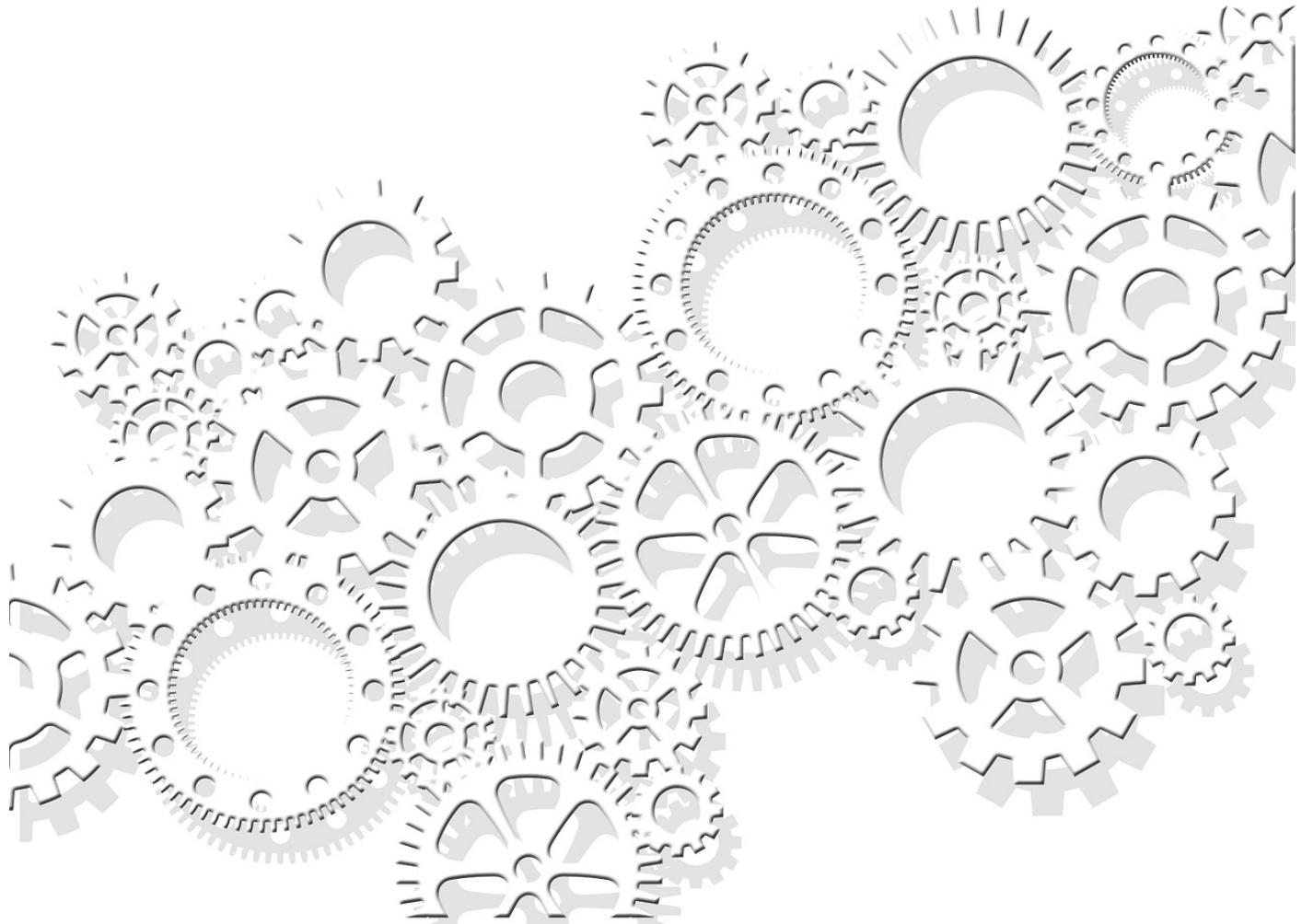


MODULE 4 SYNTHESIZING EVIDENCE

**Evidence-Informed
Policy Making Training**



RECAP OF PREVIOUS DAY OR SESSION



MODULE 4 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this module participants will:

- Know key characteristics for assessing ‘usability’ of evidence
- Define evidence synthesis & describe steps in synthesizing
- Describe what makes policy recommendations ‘actionable’
- Know functions & key elements of a policy brief
- Demonstrate evidence synthesis & draft a policy brief on their issue
- Use the ‘elevator pitch’ strategy to effectively deliver key messages about their policy issue
- Two tips for effective presentations

DETERMINING USABILITY

Scenario: You are considering using a piece of evidence from a different context.

To be useful in your situation, what kinds of questions should you ask about the evidence?



USABILITY OF EVIDENCE – 2 CONSIDERATIONS:

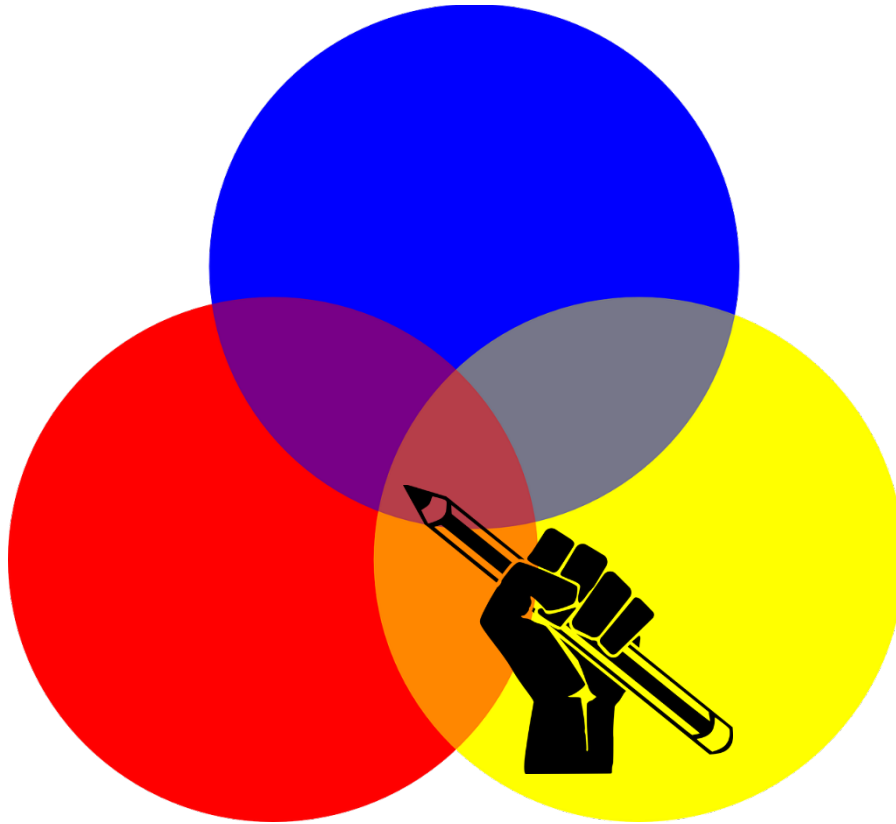
- 1. Applicability** refers to the feasibility of an innovation in a particular setting
 - Is it possible to implement it in your country?
- 2. Transferability** refers to the generalizability of an innovation
 - If relevant to your context, is it likely to generate the same impact in your setting?

GROUP ACTIVITY:

APPLICABLE FOR YOUR CONTEXT?

1. Handouts: (1) 'Assessment of Applicability & Transferability' & (2) *An Evaluation of a Community-based food supplementation for people living with HIV in Ghana*
2. In small groups, choose an institution or organization you are familiar with, e.g. the MoH
3. Answer questions to determine the evidence or innovation's applicability (feasible) & transferability (generalizable) in the chosen institution [20 min]
4. Report backs [10 min]

SYNTHESIZING EVIDENCE



Source: <https://pixabay.com/en/circles-colors-primary-red-blue-27975/>

Let's hear from our experts in the room... who routinely synthesizes evidence at work?

What is synthesis anyway??

WHAT IS SYNTHESIS?

“Synthesis is the process of ordering, recalling, retelling, and recreating into a coherent whole” (Zimmermann & Hutchins, 2003)

- Brings information together in new ways & helps interpret it
- Enables you to provide background, explore causes & effects, contrast explanations, or consolidate support for your argument
- Can consolidate summaries of several sources & point out their relationships

SYNTHESIS – WHAT ARE THE STEPS?



STEPS FOR SYNTHESIZING EVIDENCE

1. Identify
2. Read
3. Focus
4. Think
5. Arrange
6. Write
7. Visualize
8. Revise
9. Document

TIPS FOR COMPELLING AND CONCISE SYNTHESSES

- Summary is evidence-informed
- Simplify complex evidence
- Complement quantitative & qualitative evidence (use facts & stories)
- Keep it short & simple
 - 3 main messages:
 - Problem
 - Supporting evidence
 - Recommendation



Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Unbalanced_scales_lighter_one_blue.svg

TIPS FOR COMPELLING AND CONCISE SYNTHESSES (CONT.)

The 5Cs for effective summaries

1. Clear
2. Compelling
3. Credible
4. Coherent
5. Concise

Unpack complex research into simple messages, for example:

58% of people in Kenya cannot afford maize flour

OR

Nearly 6 in ten people in Kenya cannot afford maize flour

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUMMARY & SYNTHESIS?

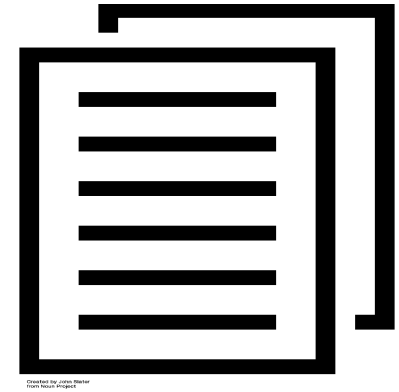
Summary

1. Basic reading/writing technique
2. Pulls together information to highlight the key points
3. Re-iterates the information
4. Shows what original authors wrote
5. Addresses one set of information (article) at a time. Each document remains distinct
6. Presents cursory overview
7. Demonstrates understanding of overall meaning

Synthesis

1. Advanced reading/writing technique
2. Pulls together information to highlight AND draws your own conclusions
3. Combines and contrasts from different sources
4. Reflects your knowledge about original authors writing, but creates something new
5. Combines parts and elements from a variety into one unified entity
6. Focuses on both main ideas and details
7. Achieves new insight

COPYING IS PLAGIARISM



Do not take someone else's work or ideas & pass them off as yours.

1. Paraphrase – put text in your own words
2. Quote if you cannot say it any better
3. Cite your source in any case

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

EXERCISE 4

Prepare summaries & a synthesis of the main findings & conclusions from evidence found to answer your policy question.

1: Prepare summaries of your key documents (~60 min)

2: Based on the summaries, prepare a 2 page synthesis of the findings, implications and conclusions (~1 hour 30 min)

3: Facilitators provide individualised feedback (1 hour)

Worksheet: Synthesizing evidence & writing actionable recommendations.

DEVELOPING ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

What is a policy recommendation?

What makes it actionable?

A POLICY RECOMMENDATION IS...

- ... simply written policy advice
- ... the chief product of the work of government managers to create & administer public policy

In addition to simple, highest level of accuracy.

Examples:

- *As a global public health recommendation, infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life to achieve optimal growth, development and health.*
- *Require hospitals to establish representative Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committees with defined responsibilities for monitoring and promoting quality use of medicines.*

UNDERSTAND THE OPTIONS BEFORE MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- When making specific recommendations, you should know what the current situation is – what is working & not working – as well as the evidence for other policy options & recommendations in addition to yours
- This type of analysis can improve the recommendations you propose & give them credibility
- It also allows you to effectively respond to counter-arguments or competing recommendations

DEVELOPING ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Ask:

- What specifically needs to be changed?
- How will this change come about?
- What resources will be needed? Where will the resources come from?
- What is the overall benefit to the policymaker and to society?

The word 'actionable' suggests that recommendations should use 'active language' words like *use*, *engage*, *incorporate*

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS...

From Case Study:

1. Harmonize funding
2. Strengthen government leadership in enabling FP & HIV linkages
3. Ensure supply chain and commodity security
4. Address human resources challenges – skills, numbers, motivation
5. Strengthen the M&E system
6. Engage civil society & community

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

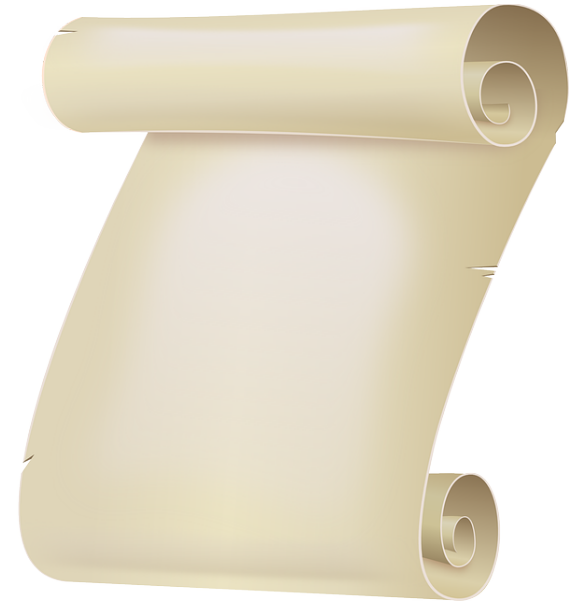
EXERCISE 5

1. Prepare a few slides to share your:
 - Key findings from the synthesis you prepared
 - Three (3) actionable recommendations [30 minutes]
2. Participants present and receive feedback [1 hour 15 min]

ODI Handout on 'How to Write a Policy Recommendation'

POLICY BRIEFS

- What are they?
- How are they used?
- What is included on a policy brief? What is NOT included?



Source: Pixabay free image

POLICY BRIEFS (CONT.)

... are concise, stand-alone documents focussing on a particular issue requiring policy attention

... are an important research product for use by decision-makers

They can be particularly effective in bridging research/
evidence & policy

POLICY BRIEFS (CONT.)

Four Main Functions

1. Explain & convey the urgency of the issue
2. Present policy recommendations or implications
3. Provide evidence to support the reasoning behind policy recommendations
4. Point the reader to additional resources

WHAT DO POLICYMAKERS WANT TO SEE IN A POLICY BRIEF?

The impact of your policy recommendations partly depends on how well the issue & arguments are presented



WHAT POLICYMAKERS WANT IN A BRIEF

1. Short, visually appealing document that is concise, quick to read, easy to understand
2. Content immediately useful & relevant to operational work
3. A visual or diagram mapping the evidence - the most helpful summarize evidence for & against interventions, and note quality/region of evidence
4. A clear, accessible key messages section
5. References to allow readers to follow up

KEY ELEMENTS OF A POLICY BRIEF

- Title of Policy Brief
- Executive summary or Key Messages
- Introduction (Definition of problem, context & Importance)
- Critique & justification of the policy options
- Recommendations
- References



Also...

KEY ELEMENTS OF A POLICY BRIEF CONTINUED

A policy brief may contain the following:

- Boxes and sidebars
- Tables
- Graphics
- Photographs
- Authors
- Acknowledgements
- Publication details
- References

Plan both the content & format of your brief. Generally, policy briefs are four pages in length (around 2,200 words, including references and tables).

VIDEO: ART & CRAFT OF POLICY BRIEFS



Source: The Women's and Children's Health Policy Center (WCHPC) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (2016). *The Art and Craft of Policy Briefs: Translating science and engaging stakeholders*'.

http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/womens-and-childrens-health-policy-center/de/policy_brief/video

GROUP ACTIVITY

CRITIQUE POLICY BRIEFS

1. Break into groups
2. Use sample briefs & checklist handout, Policy Brief Checklist, to critique briefs [15 min]
3. Groups present summary of assessment [3 min]

Writing Policy Briefs: Distance Education Module www.jrph.edu/wcbp

Policy Brief Checklist

Use this checklist to critique your own policy brief or review another author's brief.

Argument Flows Clearly		
Yes	Needs Work	Comments and suggestions
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Content is Appropriate for the Audience		
Yes	Needs Work	Comments and suggestions
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Language is Clear, Concise, and Engaging		
Yes	Needs Work	Comments and suggestions
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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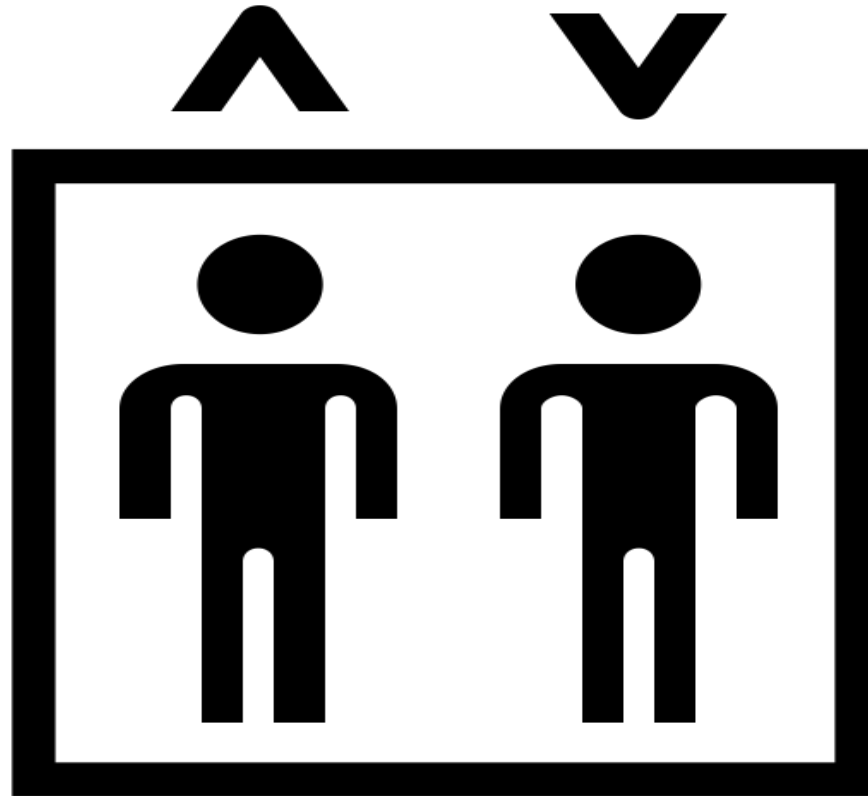
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PRACTICAL APPLICATION EXERCISE 6

Developing your policy brief

1. Begin writing the first draft of your policy brief
2. Use the Handout on Key Elements of a Policy Brief for guidance [2 hours 30 min]
3. One-on-One feedback on drafts [40 min]

ELEVATOR PITCH: WHAT IS IT?



3 COMPONENTS OF AN ELEVATOR PITCH

1. Problem
2. Evidence
3. Recommendation

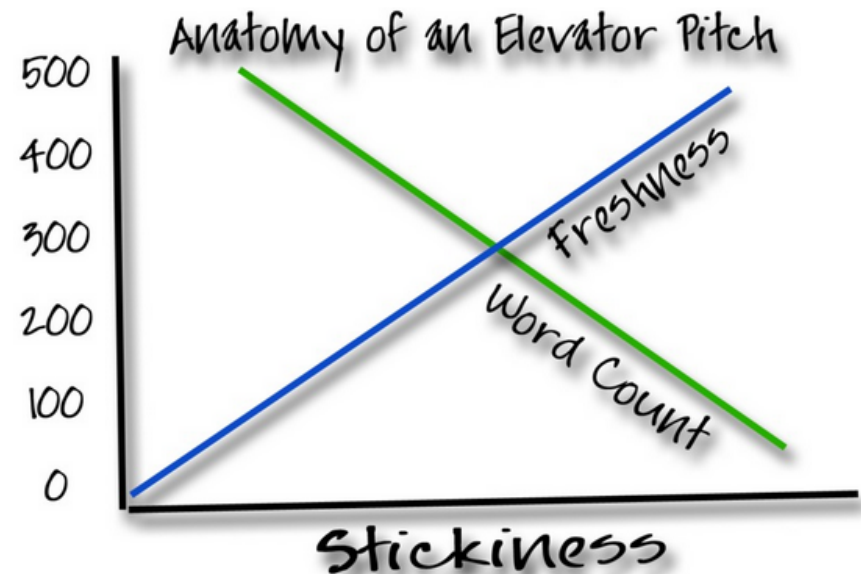


ELEVATOR PITCH SHOULD BE A...

Brief, persuasive speech about your policy

issue – 60 sec

- Interesting
- Memorable
- Succinct
- Passionate



THINK ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

What is the hook that will get them interested in your issue?

- What is in it for them?
- Why should they listen to you?
- End with a request - What you want from your audience (e.g., a meeting to discuss the issue further)

DEMONSTRATE PITCH – EIPM

Evidence Informed Policy Making

Problem:

Governments cannot create effective policies without accurate. are unfortunate gaps between what we know and what we do. considerations in policymaking, including ideology, politics.

Solution:

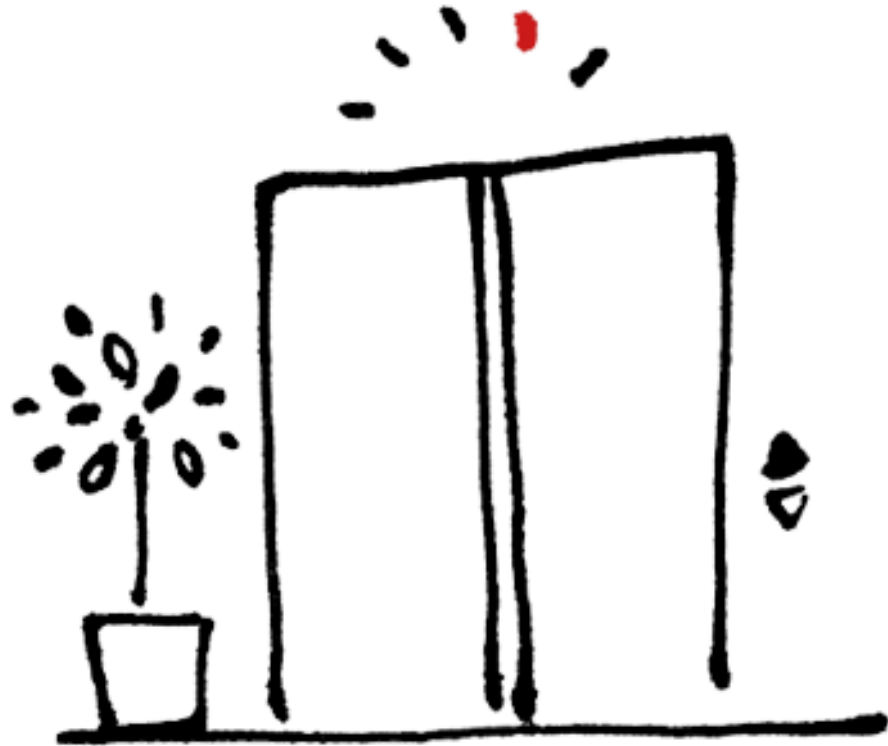
So it's very exciting that policymakers globally and in A evidence as part of their decision-making processes. In a as "evidence-informed policymaking". What this means then considering how different forms of evidence can feed information available.

Relevance:

All sorts of policy decisions can be informed and the particular problems, identifying the most powerful have the highest impact from the investment. The documented, and hold a lot of potential for us in

The ask:

I wonder if you'd be interested in a longer course like accessing, appraising, and synthesizing e



PRACTICAL APPLICATION EXERCISE 7

1. Write a draft of your elevator pitch [30 min]
2. In two groups, role play giving your elevator pitch and receive feedback [40 min]

TIPS ON POWERPOINT & PRESENTATION



LAST WORD: EFFECTIVE POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

Less is more...

ONE WORD ON EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS

Practice...

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MODULE REFLECTION & EVALUATION

Reflection:

- After your own reflection, share with the group 2-3 things you learned about synthesizing evidence

