

Recommendations for Using Evidence in Real World Physical Activity Policy Making

REPOPA PROJECT EVIDENCE BRIEF no. 3

a document for policymakers & researchers

STATEMENT

Evidence-informed policies take into account both research evidence and contextual resources, priorities and values. There is a need for tools to assess how well policies are evidence-informed. Based on our Delphi study we developed and validated indicators to do this and to offer guidance for the integration of evidence in policymaking.



A DYNAMIC PROCESS

The EU funded REPOPA project operates in 6 European Union countries and Canada, and aims to incorporate evidence and expert insight into the development of health promoting policies.

Policy development is a dynamic process with multiple factors influencing its course. The use of different sources of evidence, such as research results or experience and expertise of the stakeholder networks, is one of these factors.

EVIDENCE INFORMED POLICY MAKING

Policy making that ensures the best use of different types of knowledge such as evidence from research, expert know-how, relevant stakeholders, target groups etc.



Evidence-informed policy making can help to make policy more effective.

However, lack of tradition in evidence-informed policy making, unclear evaluation routines, lack of accountability in the policy process and urgency of the political agenda can impede this approach.

1 COMPETENCES AND SKILLS

When developing policies across sectors, as in the case of physical activity, it is crucial to involve staff with research experience, researchers and stakeholders. This allows the integration of different competences, fosters consensus building on the policy and develops new knowledge.

Involvement gives ownership but requires also being clear about each other's expectations, responsibilities and benefits of the policy outcome.

Promote and maintain networks from the start, involve leadership levels from all partners and take into account possible resistance to changes in organizational culture

2 USE AND PRODUCTION OF EVIDENCE

Using evidence to inform policy keeps the policy close to the real context. Evidence comes in many ways, from reports and scientific papers to the spoken word and network meetings. Integrating the different kinds of sources - research evidence (e.g. in collaboration with research institutions) and the different stakeholders (to place the evidence into context) - increases impact, accountability and visibility of the policy and promotes good practices.



Consider evidence sources as a resource for policy making, ensure the availability of research results, be open for changes to happen on the way and support communication between different research fields

3 COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION



Engaging stakeholders allows to assess real needs and activates feedback processes that improve policy implementation.

A clear strategy for knowledge sharing with researchers and stakeholders is needed, including having a plan on when to involve who, for what and at what stage, and staff with communication competences.

Be prepared for "language gaps" between stakeholder groups

4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION



Evaluation of evidence in policy would need collaboration with research institutes and specific procedures, including the use of indicators. Ongoing process evaluation allows for on-the-way adjustments of the policy development and implementation.

Require evaluation reports to be an outcome of financed research and education projects, secure leadership backup for evaluation and establish evaluation criteria on the use of evidence in policy from the start, including both short and long term expected results

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The full report can be found on the REPOPA website at www.repopa.eu

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