

# PEERSS TT NEWS

## ISSUE 5

### RESPONDING TO YOUR NEEDS – *The Launch of Phase 2*

Dear PEERSS,

We are ready to launch Phase 2 of the project! This phase includes Evidence Informed Policymaking Training and Coaching.

- ▶ **Evidence-Informed Policymaking (EIP) Training Workshop** scheduled for 14th, 16th and 18th March from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.
- ▶ **Coaching Programme** geared towards the co-creation of Rapid Response Briefs/ Evidence Briefs for Policy which can be deliberated on by key stakeholders at stakeholder dialogues or citizen panels.

During Phase 1 of the project, we hosted a **Project Engagement Meeting** (May 2021) and conducted a **Needs Assessment Exercise** - key informant interviews and online survey (July - November 2021). The final reports were shared with the Permanent Secretaries of the respective social sector Ministries, along with an invitation to nominate representatives to participate in the training workshop. Additionally, the findings from the Assessment were used to customise material for the training workshop and coaching programme.

The Assessment underscored some important challenges that social sector ministries face when attempting to find, appraise, synthesise, and use research evidence/data in the policymaking process. These issues centre around inadequate: (i) awareness/ understanding of EIP, (ii) capacity, (iii) skills, (iv) human resource, (v) institutional support to effectively generate and utilise evidence in policymaking/ decision-making. Limited access to quality data and the involvement of stakeholders and citizens in the process have also been identified as key challenges.





## Key Findings from the Needs Assessment Exercise

- ▶ Greater than 80% of the participants agreed that it is valuable to use evidence in policymaking/ decision-making to: (i) identify a problem that requires a policy or programme response; (ii) frame the problem and its underlying causes; (iii) decide on a set of policy options to address the problem; (iv) design the implementation strategy for a policy or programme; and (v) evaluate impact of a policy or programme.
- ▶ At least 50% of the respondents stated that they had no prior training in the following areas: evidence informed policymaking; development of knowledge translation products; planning and delivery of knowledge uptake activities; developing search strategies; and searching relevant databases for evidence.
- ▶ Respondents ranked the list of institutional constraints below (1: highest constraint; 8: lowest constraint):
  1. Lack of availability of user-friendly, easy-to-interpret and actionable evidence
  2. Weak engagement and links with external research institutions
  3. Limited human resource capacity (in-house research support)
  4. Inadequate leadership support for research and evidence informed policymaking
  5. Lack of institutional mechanisms for requesting and processing evidence
  6. Poor awareness and attitude of policymakers towards evidence
  7. Lack of quality and timely evidence
  8. Poor credibility of evidence



## Key Recommendations from the Needs Assessment Exercise

- ▶ Sensitisation and training on the role of evidence in policymaking/ decision-making geared towards the adoption/adaptation of the Integrated Knowledge Translation Framework (currently used in the health system/ sector) by the social sector ministries
- ▶ EIP training workshops: priority setting; systematically searching for, appraising, and synthesising evidence; developing knowledge translation products (rapid response briefs & evidence briefs for policy); conducting knowledge uptake activities (stakeholder dialogues & citizens' panel); and assessing impact of policies
- ▶ Coaching for select staff to reinforce learning from the EIP training workshops and to co-create evidence syntheses and conduct knowledge uptake activities for the priority issues identified
- ▶ Adopt a standard/ systematic approach to institutionalise the use of evidence in policymaking/ decision-making including the use of manuals, templates, and guidelines.
- ▶ Adopt a standard/ systematic approach to stakeholder consultations to ensure that they are participatory, consultative, inclusive, and transparent and that key stakeholders including citizens are involved in the deliberation on research evidence as part of the policy process.
- ▶ Strengthen/ leverage relationships with academic and research organisations through MOUs and/ or frameworks to facilitate training (research, M&E, data analysis) and access to resources including research databases