The most common approach to encourage use of academic research is to repackage or communicate it in different ways, but **Caroline Kenny** (http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/?p=7535#author) *finds this strategy largely ineffective. She argues that across Europe, both researchers and policymakers can benefit from training in how to interact with each other.*

The pressure on researchers to demonstrate research impact beyond academia has led to greater interest in identifying what can be done to encourage research use and the effectiveness of particular strategies for different audiences and in different contexts. Findings from the current European Commission funded 'Evidence Informed Policy and Practice in Education in Europe' (EIPPEE) project (http://www.eippee.eu/) may help to do this.

What do we know about how to increase research use in policy and practice? Although much has been written on this topic, the existing literature is conducted mainly outside Europe and in the health field. This means that for many sectors and countries there is currently an inadequate evidence base to inform future efforts to achieve and measure impact. Of the studies that have been conducted however; many provide credible evidence of the effectiveness of a number of strategies in encouraging research use.

The literature shows that although the most common approach to encourage research use, is to focus on (re)packaging (file://ioe/ssru/Users/kcrssruc/kcrssruc/bit.ly/Nmein9) or communicating research, such strategies are, on their own, largely ineffective. More successful are those that seek to address the factors that shape users' access to and use of research, and adopt a more holistic understanding about the different ways that research can be used in decision-making and the role of different actors in this process. Here, key activities are cited time and again. These include efforts to build capacity amongst users, activities that aim to increase interaction between researchers and users and, multi-dimensional approaches that incorporate two or more different types of activities.

Applying this knowledge with the aim of reaching out to policy-makers and practitioners across Europe with research is the Evidence Informed Policy and Practice in Education in Europe (EIPPEE) project.

To assist research use, the EIPPEE project is offering a wide range of tools and support to researchers, policy-makers and practitioners from across Europe, including: training for those who seek to increase the use of research in policy, support for policy-makers in utilising evidence, a forum to encourage interaction and strategic guidance on developing funding bids.

Training for those seeking to increase the use of research in policy or practice
The EIPPEE project is offering free places on a choice of three online and face-to-face courses in evidence informed policy and practice and research synthesis. The project has also undertaken four training workshops in the Netherlands, Turkey and Poland, each involving up to 30 participants.

Direct support for policy-makers and practitioners to help use evidence to address policy issues or questions
EIPPEE is providing a free consultancy service to help decision-makers from across Europe to find and use research to address the issues and questions they are interested in or working on. The service provides:

- Tailored support to help clarify the issue or question and identify and use research to address it;

- Access to introductory resources on how to find, use and understand research including links to further information and guidance;

- Access to specially developed research summaries; and

- Signposts to tools and resources on implementation as well as monitoring and evaluating outcomes.

A forum to bring together different stakeholders and encourage interaction and collaboration
We know from literature in this area that interpersonal relationships (http://ioelondonblog.wordpress.com/2012/08/03/understanding-impact-why-relationships-with-users-matter/) between researchers and users are important in determining whether, and to what extent, research

gets used. To help encourage interaction, EIPPEE has built an international network of individuals and organisations interested in evidence informed policy and practice. The Network seeks to facilitate productive engagement between a broad range of stakeholders within the research and use communities, with the long-term goal being to improve education systems across Europe.

To help encourage more European focused, methodologically robust evidence on evidence informed policy and practice, the EIPPEE website also provides guidance and resources on how to undertake research in this area and develop future funding bids (including attracting external partners and establishing collaborations). However, despite our best efforts, research cannot be used if it cannot be found. To help research become more easily available, the EIPPEE project has developed an online search-portal that enables users to identify quality assured research from across Europe. A second portal focusing specifically on systematic reviews is currently in development.

Note: This article gives the views of the author(s), and not the position of the Impact of Social Sciences blog, nor of the London School of Economics.

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The next EIPPEE conference will be held in Frankfurt, Germany 4-7 March 2013.

Related posts:

1. Event 7th December 2011: Bridging The Gap Between Research, Policy and Practice (http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2011/05/11/event-7th-december-2011-bridging-the-gap-between-research-policy-and-practice/)

2. Across Europe there is a fundamental failure to agree on the value of research. Classifying academic and government perspectives on impact is a step towards settling the debate (http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2011/08/17/europe-impact-debate-classification/)

3. Tracking research into practice: Are nurses on Twitter a good case study? (http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2012/08/03/twitter-track-research-into-practice-nurses/)

4. Aligning research results with current hegemonic policy discourses is necessary to create impact (http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2012/06/06/research-with-policy-discourses-necessary-impact/)

5. In these austere times, and with time at a premium, briefing papers can take the policy implications of research to practitioners and policy makers. (http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2011/12/08/briefing-paper-policy-implications/)