How to bring research evidence into policy?

Lessons learnt from the research for development (r4d) programme

Swiss TPH Symposium

Session 2 | Getting Evidence into Health Systems Policy and Practice

Séverine Erismann (Swiss TPH) and Claudia Zingerli (r4d programme/SNSF), 28.06.2021

Presentation outline

1. Presentation of the synthesis mandate on how to bring research evidence into policy

2. Reflections from r4d/SNSF

3. Conclusions
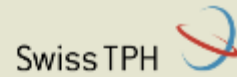
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Synthesis mandate

- **Objective**: How is research evidence taken up into policy and national decision-making?

- **Scope**: 15 Research projects in the thematic fields of Public Health from the r4d Programme, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) during the period 2012–2022

- **Synthesis work**: from September 2019 onwards conducted by Swiss TPH, mandated by the r4d programme

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Methods

- **Methods:**

  - Interviews with PIs/Co-PIs of r4d projects

  - Semi-structured interview guide

- **Key questions:**

  - How were stakeholders involved in the research project?

  - Was there uptake of research evidence in national/international policies?

- **Analysis:**

  - Qualitative content analysis to organize and structure content

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Webinar series: "from evidence to policy"

What to do with sex and gender in health research? — Swiss TPH

Facilitator

Moderator

Speakers

- Sally Mtenga, r4d Project on *Health systems governance for an inclusive and sustainable social health protection in Tanzania*
- Peter Odermatt, r4d Project on *Towards early detection of severe liver morbidity associated with Asian liver fluke infection in Lao PDR*
- Andrea Leuenberger, r4d Project on *Health impact assessment for engaging natural resource extraction projects in sustainable development in producer regions (HIA4SD)*
- Belinda Nimako, r4d Project on *Health impact assessment for engaging natural resource extraction projects in sustainable development in producer regions (HIA4SD)*
- Monica Berger, r4d Project on *Surveillance and response to zoonotic diseases in Maya communities of Guatemala: A case for One Health*

Swiss TPH — HIV and Chronic Disease Care — Clinical Research Unit — Department of Medicine

Lessons learnt from community-based HIV te & same-day ART initiation in Lesotho

Webinar series: "from evidence to policy"
February 4, 2020

Power, participation and knowledge co-production in research partnerships

Facilitator   Séverine Erismann, Swiss TPH

Speakers
- Mónica Berger, Universidad del Valle de Guatemala and Zurich University Hospital
- Amalia Pesantes, Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia
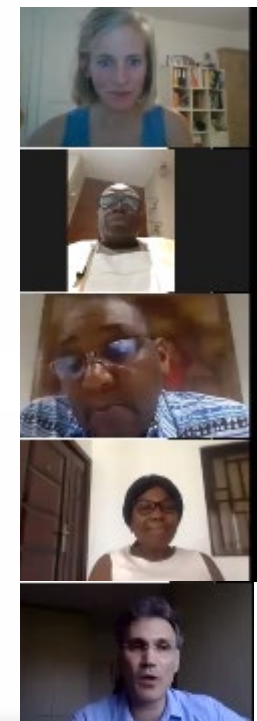- Brigit Obrist, University of Basel (Anthropology) and Swiss...

How to leave no one behind in the strive towards UHC? Lessons learnt from the national health insurance scheme in Ghana

Facilitator   Séverine Erismann, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute
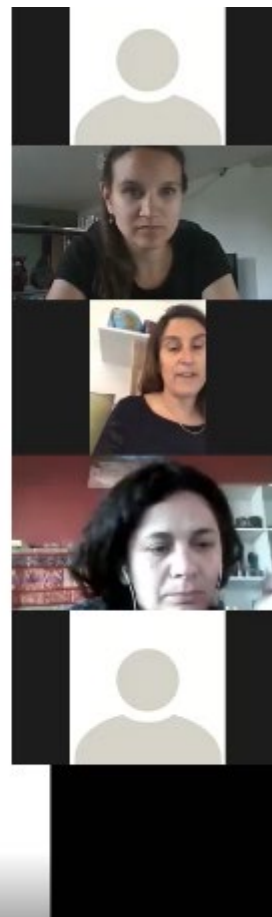
Speakers
- **Dr. Fabrizio Tediosi**, Principal Investigator of the r4d project "Health system governance for an inclusive and sustainable health protection in Ghana and Tanzania"
- **Dr. Patricia Akweongo**, r4d Research Team Member, Head of Department for Health Policy Planning and Management, University of Ghana
- **Dr. Koku Awoonor**, r4d Country Advisory Board Member, Director for Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation - Ghana Health Service
- **Dr. Francis Asenso-Boadi**, r4d Country Advisory Board Member, Acting Director for Provider Payment - National Health Insurance Authority Ghana

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How to integrate policy with research in development … or how to get into each other's influence space

Barbara Profeta, Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation

Webinar, 14 May 2020

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Results

Three strategies identified:

- ➤ (S1) Stakeholders **directly engaged** with and sought evidence from researchers;

- ➤ (S2) Stakeholders were **involved in the design** and throughout the **implementation** of the research project; and

- ➤ (S3) Stakeholders engaged in **participatory** and transdisciplinary research approaches to **co-produce knowledge** and inform policy.

S1: Stakeholders directly engaged with and sought evidence from researchers

The research team was approached by international stakeholders, based on the publication of their study protocol.

Enabling factors:

- Raising awareness on planned research: publishing in peer-reviewed journals (study protocol, results)

- Importance of the timeliness and relevance of findings and the production of credible and trustworthy reports

S2: Stakeholders were involved in the design and throughout the implementation of the research project

Policy uptake is facilitated through stakeholder engagement from the beginning as well as during the conduct of research activities, through participating at workshops or functioning in the governance of the projects.

Enabling factors:

- Constant collaboration with an advisory and steering group composed of diverse stakeholders, including policy-makers, from early on

- Locally led and demand-driven research => strengthening local research capacities and institutions, investing in research that is aligned with national research priorities
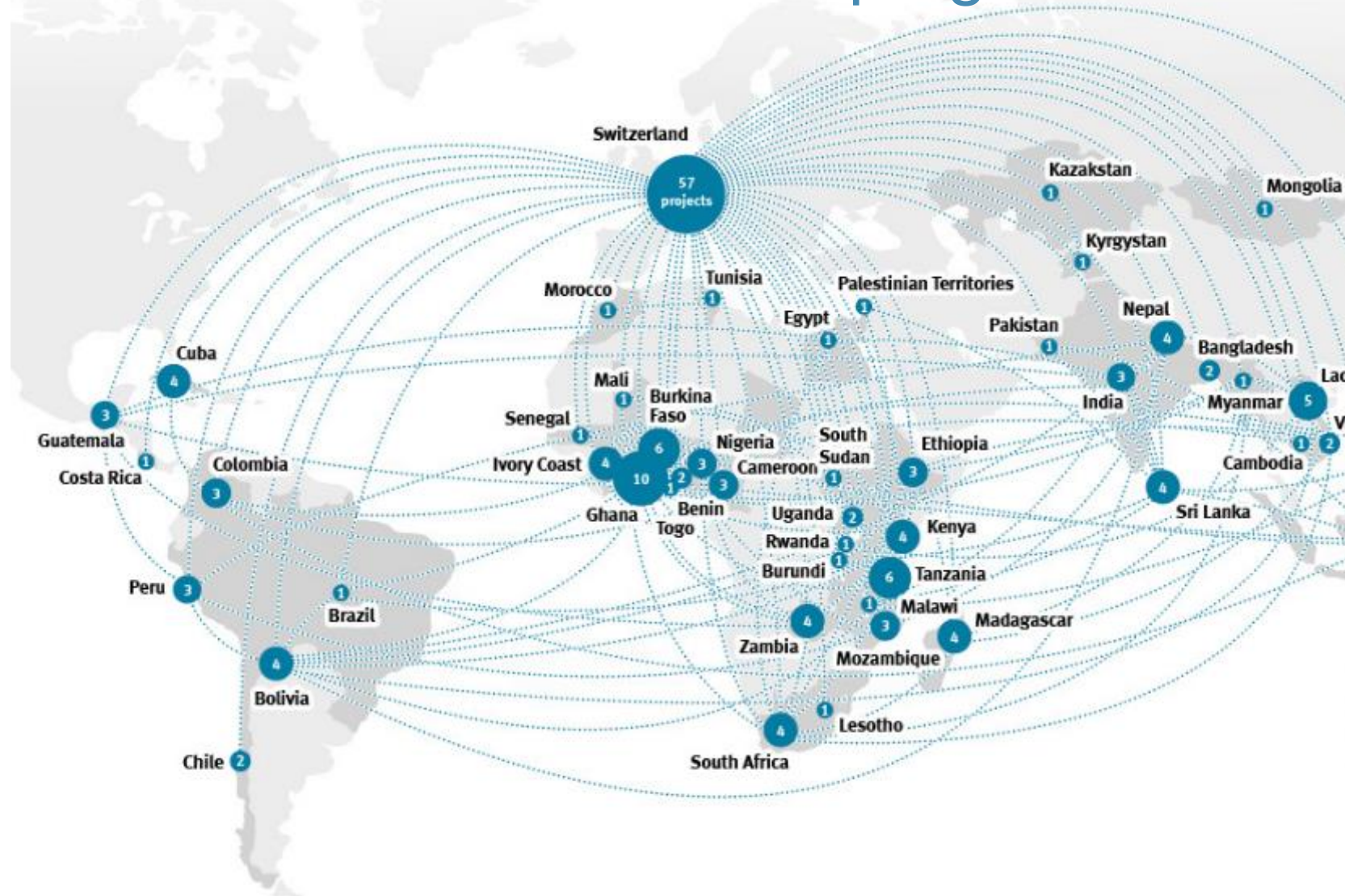
S3: Stakeholders engaged in participatory and transdisciplinary research approaches to co-produce knowledge and inform policy

The research questions, design and intervention approaches arose through community and stakeholder co-creation and participation.

Enabling factors:

- Co-learning and work across the local policy landscape minimized impacts of unequal power dynamics through equal partnerships

- Collaborative efforts of various stakeholders enabled establishment of a shared vision for supportive health systems.

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Reflections from SNSF/r4d programme

Structural «push» for projects to contribute to r4d programme goals:

- 57 transnational, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary projects
- Theory of Change and Communication Strategy key elements of the proposal
- 10-15% of global project budget to be spent on communication

Learning and responsiveness within r4d programme framework (10 years):

- r4d Skills events series
- Calls for communication products
- 13 cross-project synthesis projects
- 13 Transformation Accelerating Initiatives

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Amplifying efforts at programme level – once stories and results from projects are emerging
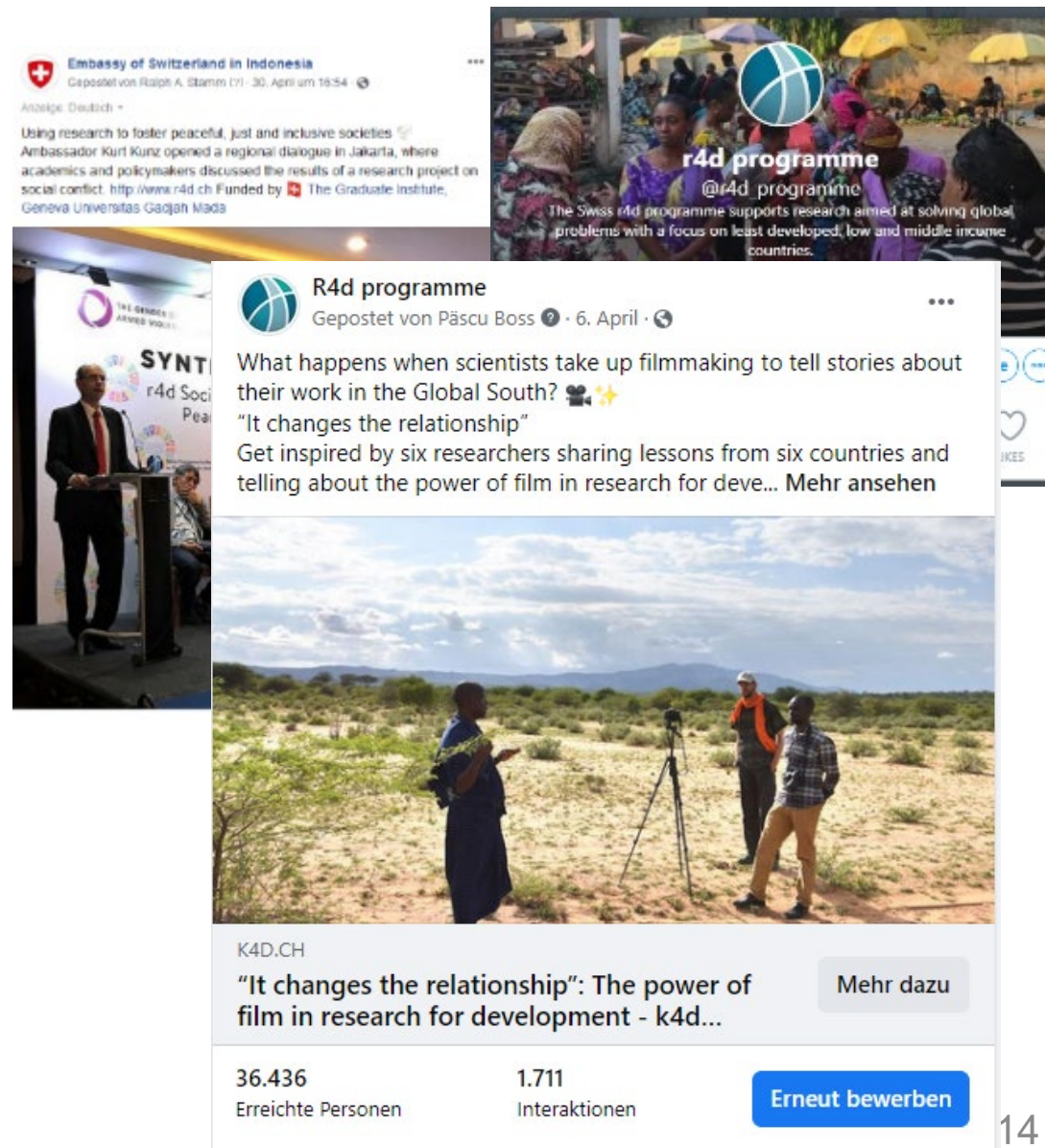
Knowledge for Development - www.k4d.ch: An online platform portraying evidence-based research information tailor-made for an interested public and professionals in the field of sustainable development and cooperation.

Amplifying efforts at programme level - Dialogue events and Social Media

- r4d Lunches: 1.5h lunch events, input by r4d project, selected non-academic audience
- Administration and parliamentarian visits: bespoke thematic events with selected public administrators and politicians
- Thematic conferences for mixed audiences
- Science Fairs

See: http://www.r4d.ch/r4d-programme/events;
https://twitter.com/r4d_programme;
https://www.facebook.com/r4dprogramme/

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Conclusions

- Key to support capacity-building activities for researchers to engage in communication and dissemination activities

- Crucial to make use of existing platforms and social media (twitter, media, facebook) or to provide additional platforms, such as the k4d – featuring project results, highlighting stories selected and portrayed by communication professionals (reducing burden/ time investment)

- Important to provide an enabling funding environment (long-term project set-up, ToC, comm/dissemination budget)

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