

# Strategic planning for research uptake

Research uptake workshop,  
12-14 September 2017,  
Kilifi, Kenya.



LONDON  
SCHOOL of  
HYGIENE  
& TROPICAL  
MEDICINE



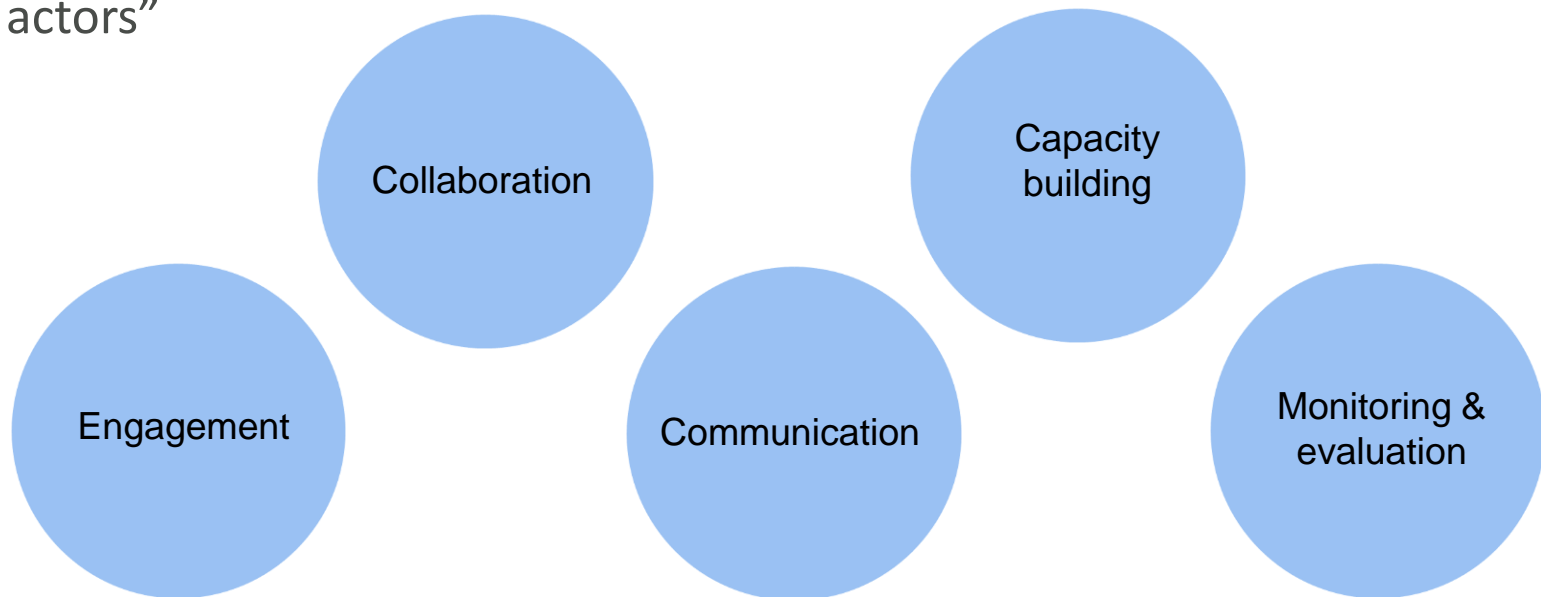
<http://resyst.lshtm.ac.uk>  
[@RESYSTresearch](https://twitter.com/RESYSTresearch)

# In this resource

- Understand the importance of strategic planning for research uptake
- Familiarise key aspects of a research uptake strategy
- Develop research uptake objectives for your research group, project, hub or an event
- Identify key stakeholders using stakeholder analysis techniques
- Review communications channels, outputs and activities
- Explore indicators and tools for monitoring and evaluation

# What is research uptake?

**DFID:** “All activities that facilitate and contribute to the **use** of research evidence by policy-makers, practitioners and other development actors”



# What is research uptake?



## The Evolution of Research Uptake

### Research Dissemination

- Distribute information to academic & other audiences
- Usually one-way

### Research Communication

- Share research outputs
- Involve stakeholders from planning to implementation to M+E

### Research Uptake

- Engage with change agents from outset
- Stimulate access + application of research
- Synthesise evidence to provide balance

Summarised from DFID  
Guidance on Research Uptake, 2013

# Strategic planning for research uptake

- A structured approach towards achieving specific research uptake objectives
- Objectives are based on the organisation or project goals
- Involves communications specialists, researchers, project managers
- Requires engaging with stakeholders at every step of the project – from the before the research to after the research is completed

# Stages of a research uptake strategy





# Why is a strategic approach important?

- It ensures greater impact – every product, activity, interaction counts towards the goal
- Activities are pro-active rather than re-active
- Focus on key stakeholders leads to appropriate channels of communication, targeted messaging
- More efficient and cost effective
- Easier to monitor and evaluate activities that are planned and organised



# Strategies are...

- Scalable
  - They can be detailed or act as a general guide
  - They can be used for a single report, an entire project, group or organisation
- Not set in stone
  - They should be changed to reflect the evolution of a project
- An art not a science
  - There is no one best way to promote uptake and communicate in every situation

# Stage 1: Objectives



- What do you want your research uptake activities to achieve?
- What do you want people to do differently (think, act, design or implement policies) as a result of your actions?



# RESYST example

**Overarching goal:** Research contributes to policy and management changes that enhance the resilience and responsiveness of health systems in low and middle income countries

## **Research uptake objectives:**

- 1. Collaboration:** Key stakeholders are involved in, or supportive of, RESYST research throughout each stage of the research process
- 2. Engagement:** Strengthened/new relationships with stakeholders working on health systems issues, and with those who can influence change
- 3. Raise profile:** Members of RESYST are viewed as a trusted and high-quality source of evidence by policy-makers and academics
- 4. Share information:** Research outputs are accessible to stakeholders at local, national and international levels

# Research uptake objectives

Objectives should be:

**S** Specific

**M** Measurable

**A** Achievable

**R** Realistic (within timeframe, budget, resources)

**T** Timely

# Some more examples

- Build awareness of a project
- Influence specific policies/policymakers around key aspects
- Encourage participation among researchers or partner bodies
- Strengthen internal communication of a project
- Engage stakeholders to support change
- Increase capacity of intermediaries to write about science research
- Build a network of people and groups interested in a particular topic

## STEP 2: Stakeholders



- Who are you trying to reach?
- Who influences them?
- When should you engage with stakeholders?

# Stakeholder analysis

## Stakeholder analysis:

Process of identifying who the key stakeholders are

- Brainstorming and mapping techniques to:
  - Analyse how much interest in and influence over the project they have
  - Identify links and relationships between stakeholders
  - Prioritise stakeholders



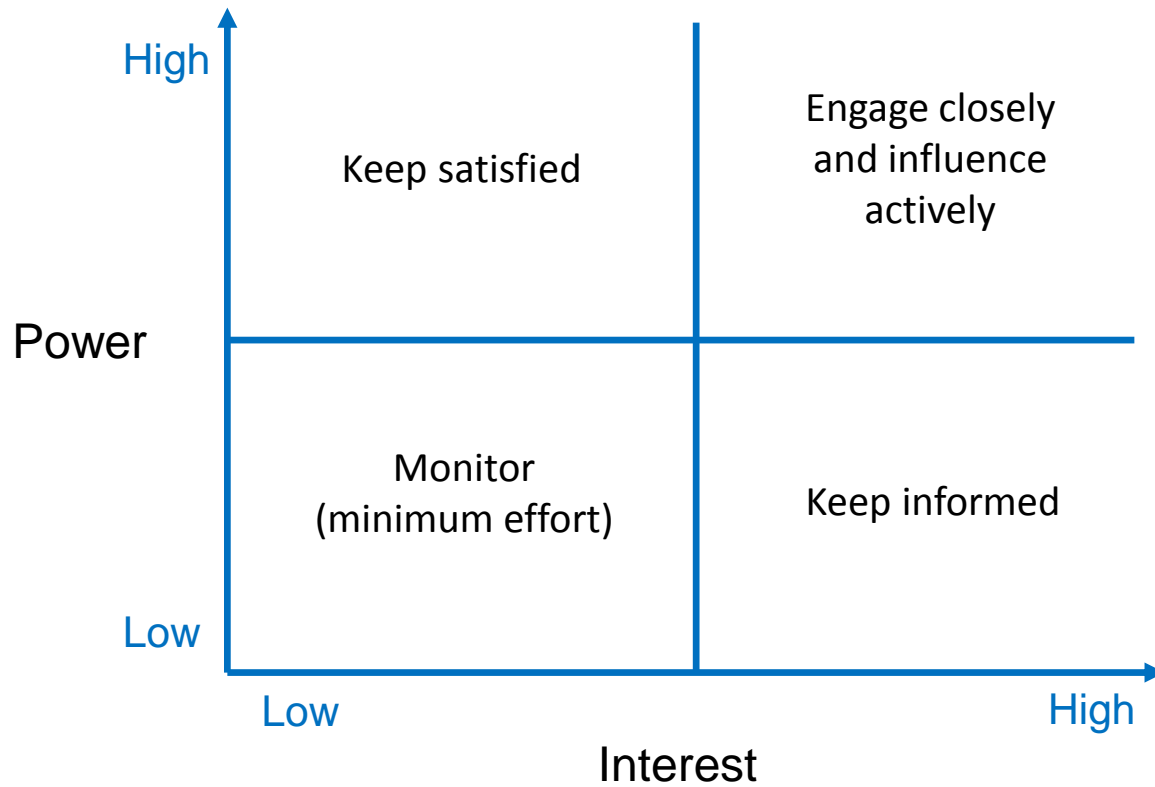
# Why is stakeholder analysis important?

- Creates a shared understanding of the people who can impact on your success
- Is a vital step in determining approaches to policy engagement and communications channels
- Identifies potential risks from negative stakeholders
- Prioritises stakeholders so the appropriate amount of resources can be assigned and the right strategy is applied

# Steps



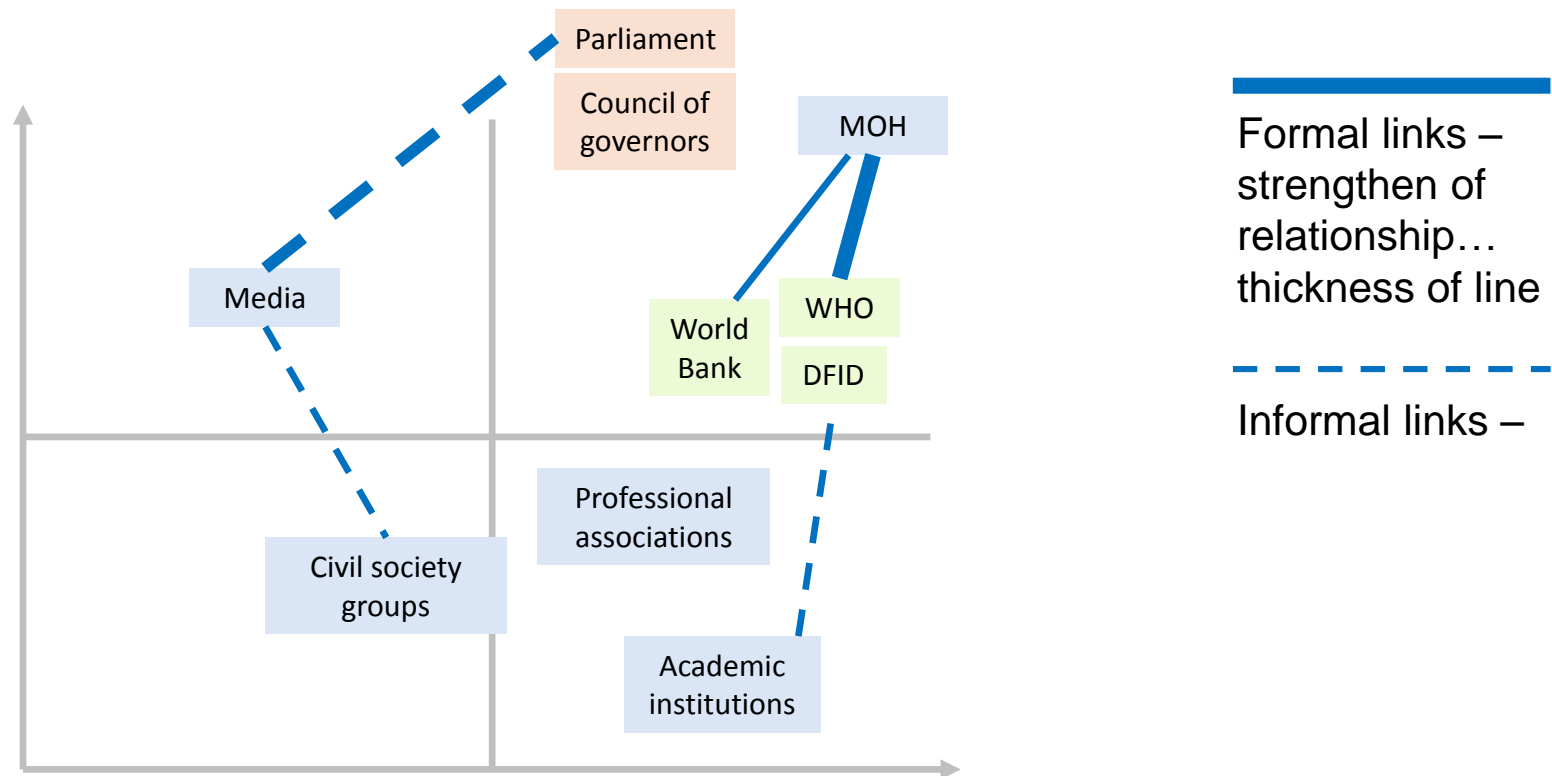
# Interest/power matrix



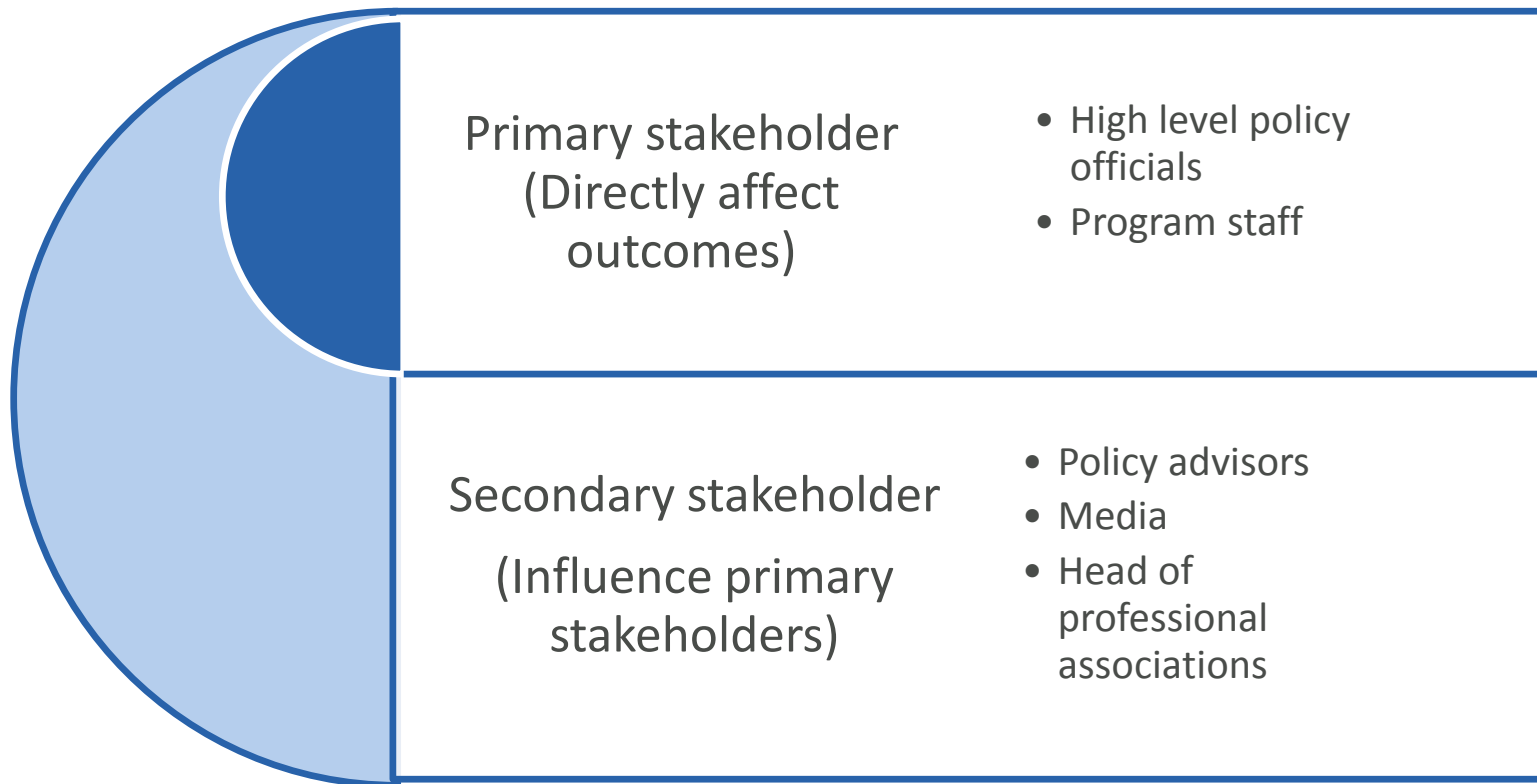
# Intermediaries

- People do not make decisions in isolation
  - They often rely on information and advice from other specialists and organisations
  - Can be influenced by media, opinion leaders
- Important to analyse links between stakeholders
  - Types of relationships they have, e.g. formal/informal
  - Strength of relationships

# Links - mapping relationships



# Prioritise stakeholders



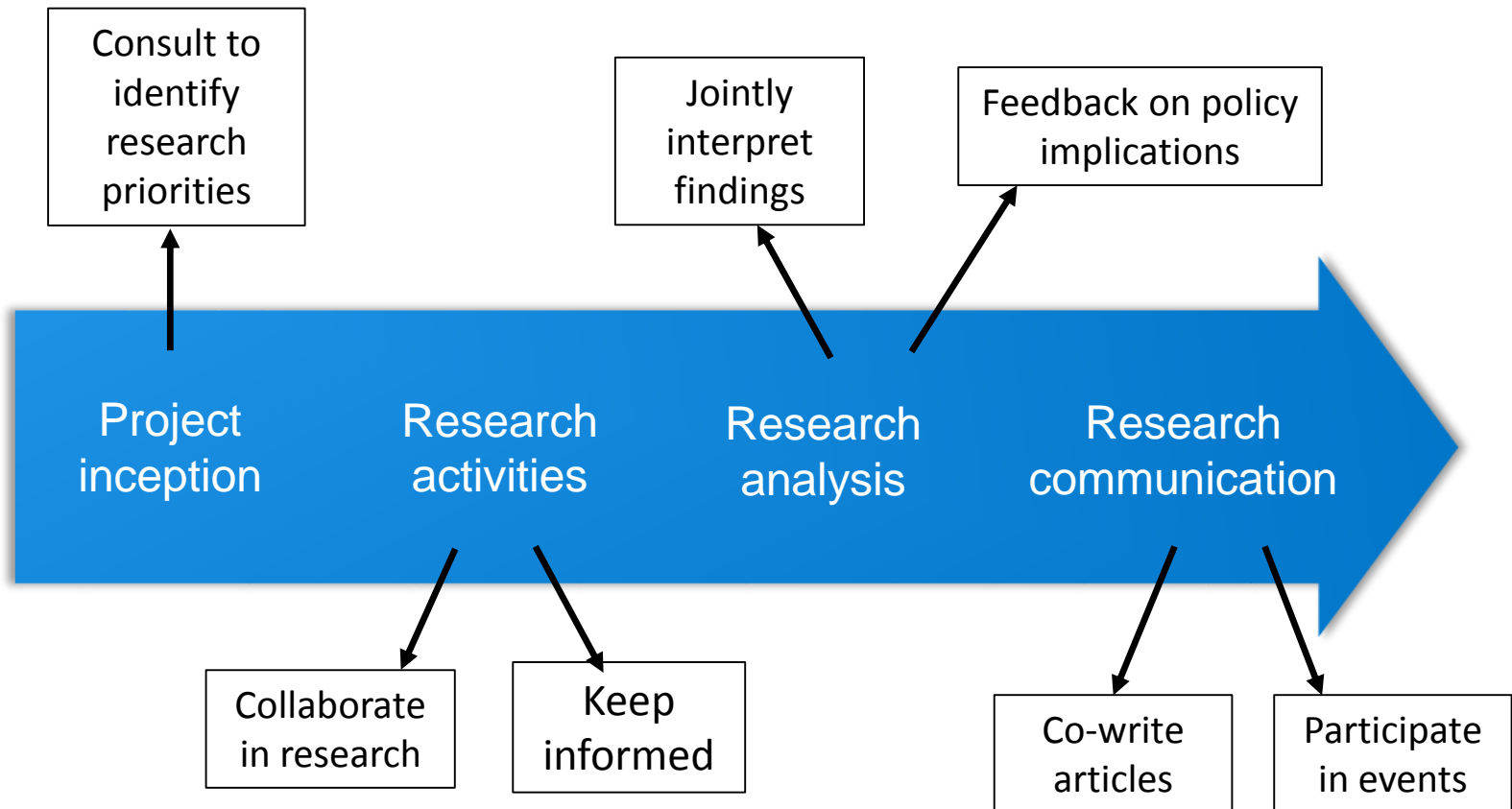
# RESYST stakeholders

**Primary:** people responsible for developing or implementing health systems policies or plans

- **National level:** Staff in Ministry of Health and Finance, politicians, policy advisors
- **Sub-national level:** District and hospital managers, primary care facility managers
- **International:** Country staff and technical advisors to multilateral organisations, bilateral aid donors, Global Health Initiatives

**Secondary:** Civil society organisations, research networks, professional associations (nursing, management)

# When to engage with stakeholders?



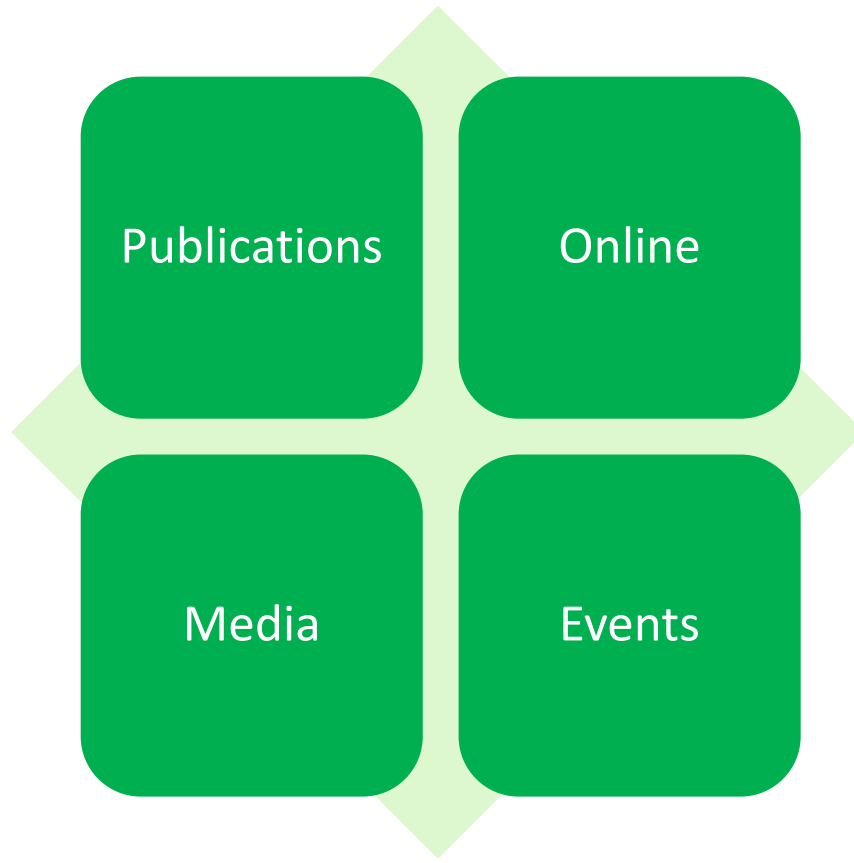


# Communication channels



- What communication channels, outputs and activities are most effective in reaching your stakeholders?
- What mix works for you and your organisation?
- How will you plan the work?  
– responsibilities, timing, budget

# Main delivery channels



# Publications

Academic journal



- Presents final results of the research
- External peer review
- Academic, expert community



Research report



- Final report of a research project
- Internal peer review
- Not aimed at a single audience



Working paper (series)



- Preliminary results of ongoing research
- Literature review
- Invites discussion on key arguments
- Researchers and technical experts



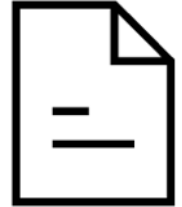
Workshop or event report



- Summary of proceedings
- Links to materials from the event
- Wide audience including participants



# Publications – types of brief

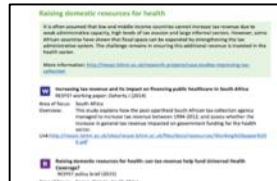


- Short, concise summary of the research or evidence (usually 2 or 4 pages)
- Based on and links back to evidence

- **Policy brief** – policy focused; sets out problem and solution; contains policy recommendations or implications to its main audience
- **Research brief** – summary of the research including background, methods, findings and conclusions
- **Topic overview** – synthesis of wider evidence on a specific policy or research issue; highlights added-value of the research
- **Project brief** – information about the project: aims, objectives, methods and achievements

# Publications

Annotated reading list (bibliography)



- Outline of key reading materials (with links) on a subject matter
- Annotated bibliography contains summaries of each document

Training manual, guide



- Introduction to basic concepts
- 'How to' style
- Links to resources

Key findings sheet



- Highlights the key findings of a research project
- Event, website

Project leaflet/ flyer




- Information about a project
- Visually appealing
- Conferences and events

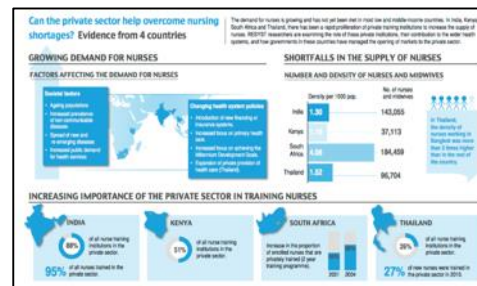
# Publications – types of posters


## Academic poster



- Summary of the research
- Presentation, visual
-  Conferences – academic, engaged audience
- e-posters - available online, interactive


## Infographic



- Graphics to communicate data or research
- Maps, word clouds
-  Broad audience – highly targeted

## Information/motivational poster



- Educational
- Health clinics
-  Communities/patients

# Online

Website



- Information about the project, publications
- Relevant (frequent updates), user friendly
- Attention to writing for the web

Blog



- Introduce research, outputs, events
- Researcher opinions
- Broad audience – layout and language accessible

Emailed newsletter



- Announce past, current, future activities
- Hyperlinks to further detail
- General audience

Social media & networks



- Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn
- Short, direct, links, hashtags, images
- Micro-blogging

# Online

Video (YouTube)



- Stories from the research, 'talkingheads', mini-documentaries
- Broad and diverse audience
- Low-cost videos using smartphone

Prezi



- Animation tool for presentations
- Dynamic output for websites and conferences
- Grab and direct audience attention

Photo stories



- Visual story telling
- Provide narrative context
- Showcase photography outputs

Podcast

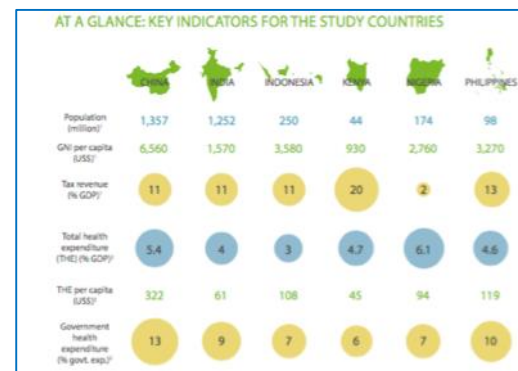
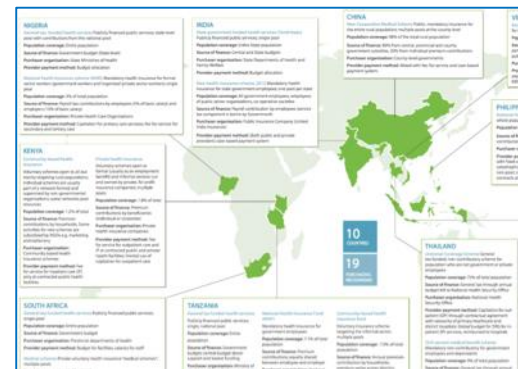


- Can be produced alongside video
- Short and clear – 30 seconds-3 minutes
- National and local radio stations

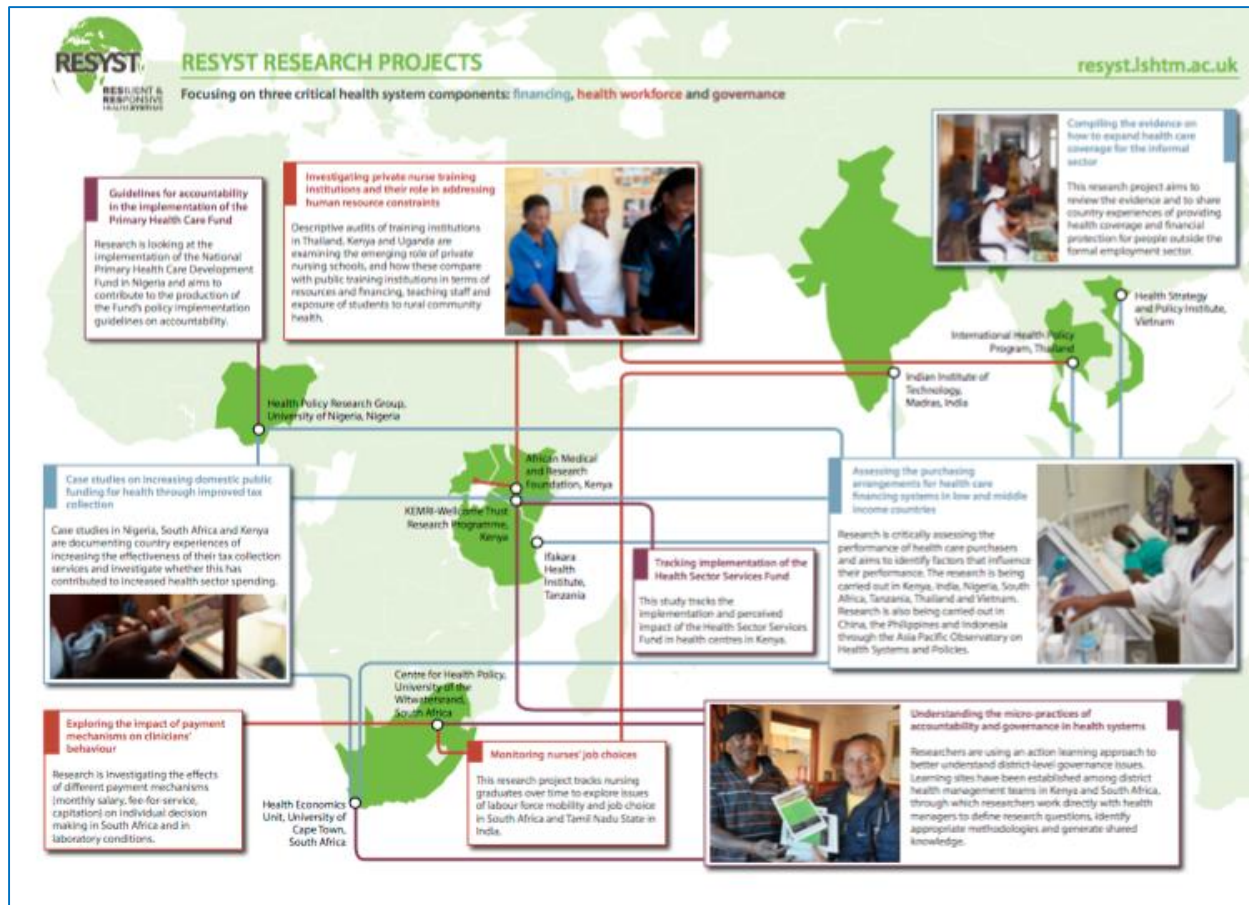


# Infographics

- Visual information to explain complex data or concepts, e.g. global health trends
- Interactive visualisations enable users to search through large data sets themselves
- Benefits for smaller-scale research – understand and communicate information

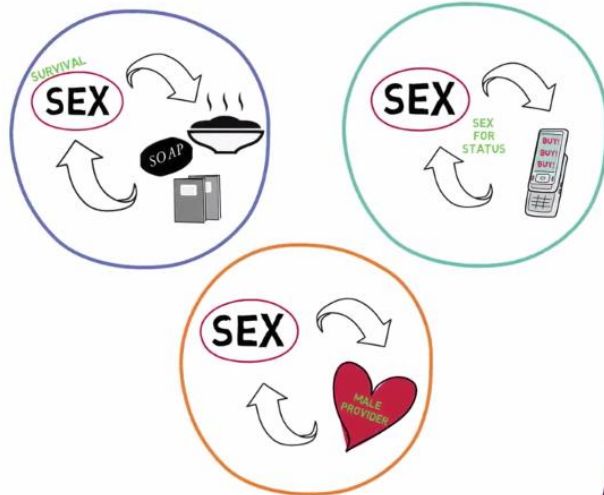


# Infographics



# Animations

## MOTIVATIONS



- Animations guide the viewer through a clear narrative
- Accessible and unique way of illustrating and sharing complex ideas, concepts or research findings

<https://youtu.be/yx2hHdkNtK4>

# Embedded videos

**Key ethical challenges**

Table 1 sets out the main ethical challenges experienced by the researchers. These are discussed in more detail below.

**Table 1: Overview of challenges experienced by researchers in the KRR learning site**

| General areas   | Challenges  |
|---|---|
| Consent process and participants' understanding of the research | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of data obtained outside the formal research environment and over a long period of time</li> <li>2. Changing nature and understanding of the research</li> </ol>      |
| Building and maintaining respectful relationships               | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Forming relationships and alliances as an embedded researcher</li> <li>4. Challenging normative research findings without making participants being identified</li> </ol> |
| Managing expectations and requests from participants            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Responding appropriately to requests to act outside the researcher role</li> </ol>  |

**Consent process and participants' understanding of the research**

**1. Use of data obtained outside the formal research environment**

The long-term nature of the research created an ethical challenge regarding whether the initial formal consent processes covered information gained many months later. How long a period does the consent process cover? Further information was often gathered during informal meetings with managers and/or practitioners outside the formal research environment. Researchers faced a challenge in deciding whether the information was covered by the consent process, and if so, how to use it in a way that did not compromise the trust developed with health managers.

**Solutions and lessons learned**

- Consent, in terms of formal messages given formally to research participants at the outset of the study, is only one part of a wider set of interactions. Regular interaction, discussion and reflection with key actors throughout the research process was found to be essential.
- To minimise ethical challenges relating to the consent process, researchers held regular planning and feedback meetings with participants to ensure they contributed to, understood and supported the evolving research ideas and overall approach.

**3. Changing nature and understanding of the research**

Both researchers and health managers/practitioners' understanding of the research evolved over time. For some managers/practitioners, their view of researchers also changed towards seeing them more as confidantes and problem solvers than as objective researchers. While the process supports access to key tacit information about health system issues, it raises further questions about the initial consent processes and whether those remain relevant for the research and true to what participants initially signed up to over time.

*"Apart from the times you are doing formal interviews a lot of the information you get is held informally which significantly contributes to the research subject... how do we use that data in a way that doesn't cause harm to the people who provided that information?"*  
Dr Benjamin Tsafie

**Building and maintaining respectful relationships**

**3. Forming relationships and alliances as an embedded researcher**

In the KRR learning site, one researcher held formal roles as both a researcher and systems policy advice. The continuous engagements with managers at national, county and sub-county level meant that he was particularly 'embedded' in the health system, with positive implications for learning and building relationships. However, a challenge of this embeddedness was the need to be careful about who he was seen to be aligned with, which in turn had the potential to influence other perceptions and engagements with researchers, and how findings were listened to and taken up.

**Solutions and lessons learned**

- Careful consideration and planning was needed to ensure that relationships with participants were not harmed and power imbalances between participants were not exacerbated.
- It was considered important to feedback findings in a way that did not undermine confidentiality arrangements with participants. At feedback meetings, researchers avoided discussing individual situations and provided instead broader, more generalisable lessons, and highlighted, whenever possible, positive practices to learn from and build upon.
- Another approach they adopted was to work with individuals to support them to develop their own solutions, in the hope that this would have a longer term positive impact.

**Managing expectations of participants**

**5. Responding appropriately to requests from health managers**

During the study period, researchers were presented with numerous requests from health managers and providers. Requests ranged from researchers being asked to assist with small roles in busy facilities through to requests for extra allowances. Some health managers sometimes also requested researchers to provide scientific support for decisions they had already made.

**4. Disclosing sensitive research findings anonymously**

Some of the information that researchers came across during their investigations was sensitive and put managers at risk if shared with others, such as accusations of corruption by managers, or evidence of unfair charging practices at health facilities. This raised several ethical challenges including if and how to make a judgement from an outsider's perspective on whether what was being reported accurate or unsubstantiated, and, relatedly, what if any action would be appropriate.

Further, researchers faced challenges regarding how to share research findings anonymously, especially in relation to studies where detailed descriptions of the subject indicate 'thickness' or quality in data. Here the dilemma was how much information could be shared without making participants being identified, and thereby undermining respect.

**Solutions and lessons learned**

Researchers introduced dilemmas for researchers. Acting on resource requests had potentially important positive implications for learning about health system realities and/or building relationships. However, succumbing to such requests could change what researchers were observing? Researchers were also concerned about how sustainable any support would be, and whether intervening in the short term might undermine the possibility of longer term solutions and raise expectations of what researchers could do in the future.

*"Working with managers has led me to develop relationships that are an integral part of the system."*  
Dr Mary Nykurit

- Publication (brief, poster, graphic) contains short video clips
- Useful as a teaching resource
- Case-studies, researchers providing more detail

[http://resyst.lshtm.ac.uk/sites/resyst.lshtm.ac.uk/files/Web\\_Ethical%20challenges%20in%20conducting%20embedded%20long%20term%20research.pdf](http://resyst.lshtm.ac.uk/sites/resyst.lshtm.ac.uk/files/Web_Ethical%20challenges%20in%20conducting%20embedded%20long%20term%20research.pdf)

# Media

## Op-ed



- Columns in national/local newspaper to put forward an idea
- Engaging, punchy writing
- Broad but informed audience

## Interviews in TV, radio, print media



- Expert opinion, interviews
- Issue of public interest or current affairs
- Engage in discussions or debate

## News story



- Information about current events
- Accessible, fact-based writing
- Audience dependent upon outlet

## Press release



- To let the media know about new project, research outputs or an event
- Newsworthy information



# Media

## Media briefing and training



- Face to face meetings with journalists
- Explain key policy issues, or issues of public interest to the media
- Targeted at journalists in various media
- Training sessions for journalists to write about science

# Events

Workshop and training



- Presentation of research findings followed by discussion and interaction
- Targeted at interested people

Webinar



- Online seminars, use online tools to enable participation
- Access to internet

Conference - presentation, session



- Preliminary results of ongoing research
- Invites discussion on key arguments
- Researchers and technical experts

Private meeting with stakeholders



- Formal or informal
- Opportunity to build relationships and share materials

# Events

Lecture (public, students)



- Presentation of research findings followed by discussion and interaction
- Targeted at interested people



Roundtable meeting



- Academic discussion on an agreed topic
- Productive way to move forward debate
- Bring together influential actors from different organisations/sectors

Theatre, storytelling



- Creative presentation of research
- Encourages engagement with research for more general audiences
- Community mobilisation or activism





# Communications mix

- Communications mix is crucial – using a combination of channels is more effective than one campaign.
- Appropriate mix depends on:
  - Objective – e.g. raise awareness, advocacy, mobilisation
  - Audience - literacy, preferred information sources
  - Social environment: available media, cultural context
  - Available resources and skills
- **Mix that works for you and the organisation**

# RESYST's learning sites work

## Publications



## Online



## Events



# SASA! Act now against violence

## Publications



## Online



## Media



## Events



### Violence Prevention Learning Center

The Violence Prevention Learning Center, a collaboration between Raising Voices and the Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP), provides fresh insights and pioneering approaches for preventing violence in personal relationships —plus support for putting it all into action. Learning begins in one of our highly interactive courses linking theory and practice, and then it continues with technical assistance for taking action.

There are two ways to participate in the Violence Prevention Learning Center:

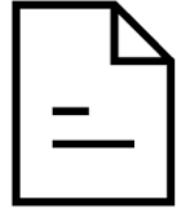
1) Become a SASA! partner or

2) Register for the PIVOT Partnerships.

Raising Voices is launching a new initiative: PIVOT (Preventing Violence Together) Partnerships. As a field, we now know key evidence-based principles for effective violence against women prevention programming, and that applying these principles to our practice can help to create safer relationships and communities. However, the skills for translating these principles into practice can sometimes be a challenge. The PIVOT Partnerships are a one-year initiative that include a four-day in-person training course in Kampala followed by a year of technical support with the aim of assisting activities and practitioners to apply key



# Workplan



How will the activities be carried out?

Detailed information about:

- Who is responsible for the activity
- Whether or not they require support
- Date it should be completed by
- Budget
- What is the evidence that the activity has taken place

# STEP 5: Monitoring and evaluation



- How can you measure success (or otherwise) in research uptake and communications efforts?
- What online tools are available to collect data?

# What is monitoring and evaluation?

## **Monitoring:**

- Routine, ongoing collection of information about a project or programme
- Indicators to measure and report on performance

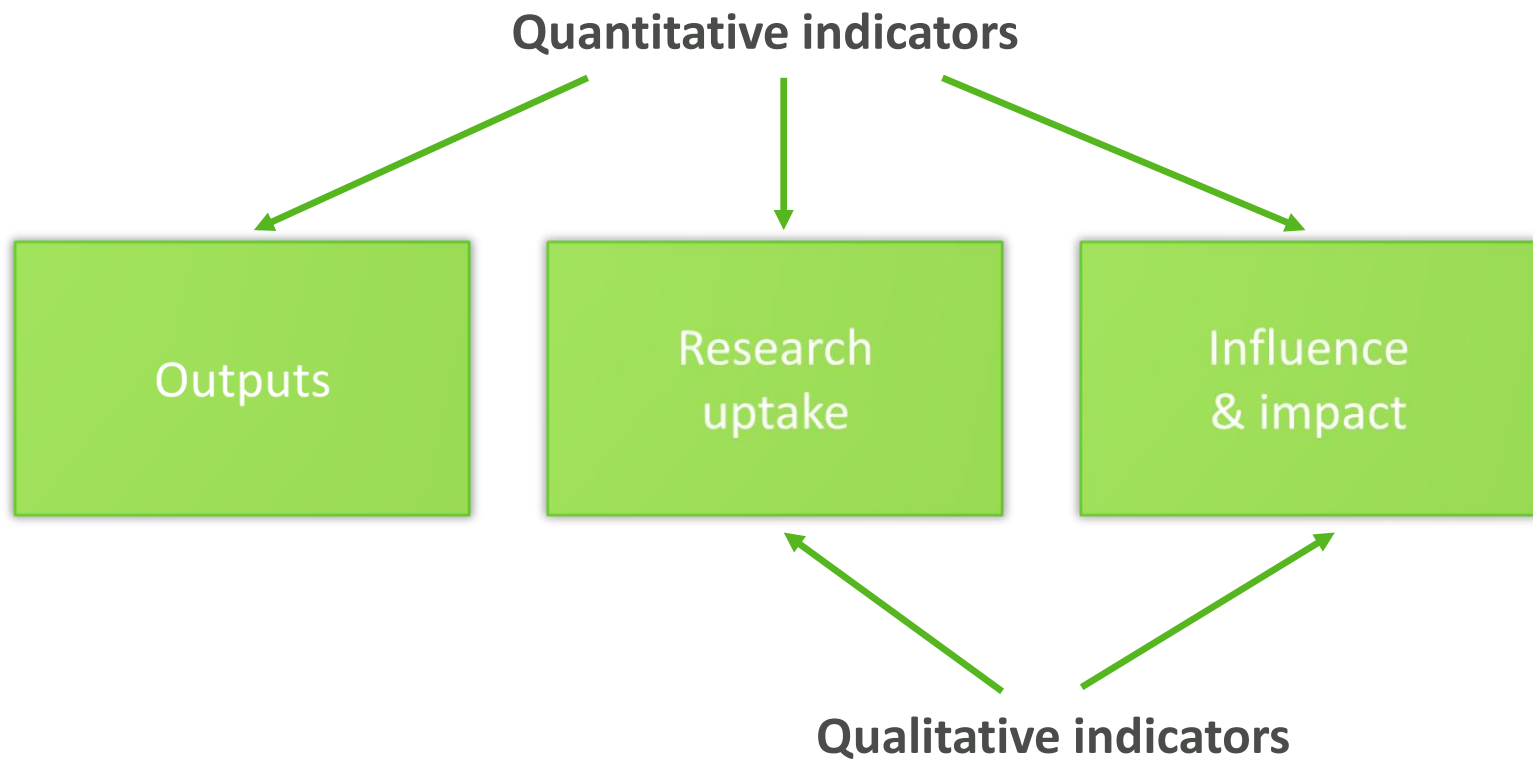
## **Evaluation:**

- Periodic, retrospective assessment of a project to provide useful feedback (internal or external by independent evaluators)

# Why evaluate research uptake activities?

- To improve future efforts
  - Provides information to help assess the effectiveness of the research uptake strategy and activities, and amend it accordingly.
- Ensures accountability
  - To project members/supporters, stakeholders, funders
- Formal requirement from funders
  - Research projects are required to report on more than just outputs, but also impacts of the research beyond academia

# RESYST approach





# Measuring outputs

Are outputs appropriate, accessible and of high quality?

## **Publications**

- Number of open-access, peer-reviewed publications
- Number of article views and downloads

## **Events**

- Number of engagements with key stakeholders
- Number of presentations at conferences

## **Online**

- Number of unique website users
- Number of downloads
- Disaggregated by country

## **Media**

- Media coverage

# Measuring uptake

Was the work shared and passed on to others?

## **Publications**

- Number of citations in research articles and reports (proxy for research quality)

## **Online**

- Social network mentions
- Comments on blogs
- Subscriptions to newsletter

## **Events**

- Number of webinar attendees
- Requests for research, advice
- Feedback survey

## **Media**

# Measuring influence

Did the work contribute to change in policy or practice?

## **Publications**

- Citation or reference in policy document
- Reference in guidelines

## **Online**

- Testimonial - emails from stakeholders

## **Events**

- Details of participation in advisory committees
- Details of specific engagements with key stakeholders

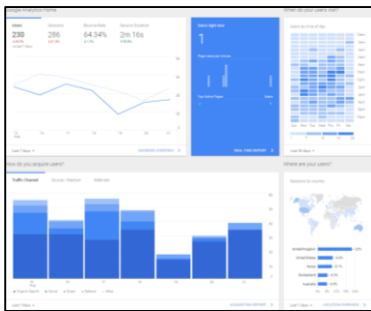
## **Media**

- Details of media coverage

# Qualitative indicators

- Short narratives to describe the contribution of the research to policy/practice
  - Stories of change from researchers (impact stories)
- Case-studies about impact pathways (what led to change)
  - Interviews with stakeholders
  - Review of supporting evidence
  - Timeline mapping changes in policy, research uptake activities, and changes in behaviour of key stakeholders (RAPID Outcome Assessment)

# Online tools to collect data



Google analytics



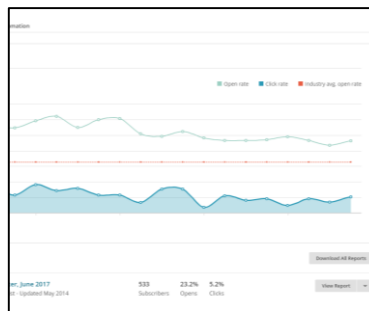
Journal metrics



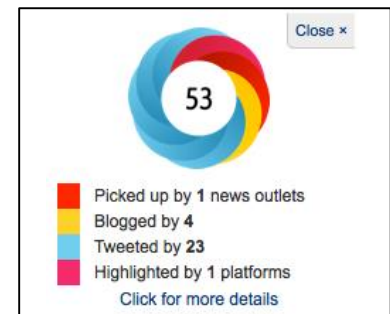
Google Scholar



Bitly

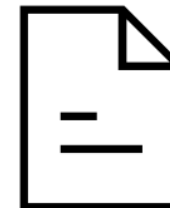


Mailchimp



Altmetric

# Altmetric



## What sources does Altmetric track?

### News outlets

- Over 1,300 sites
- Manually curated list
- Text mining
- Global coverage

### Social media and blogs

- Twitter, Facebook, Google+
- Public posts only
- Manually curated list

### Post-publication peer review

- Publons
- PubPeer

### Reference managers

- Mendeley, CiteULike
- Reader counts
- *Don't count towards the Altmetric score*

### Other sources

- Wikipedia
- YouTube
- Reddit
- F1000
- Pinterest
- Q&A

### Policy documents

- NICE Evidence
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- Many more...

- Non-traditional sources
- Trace research impact
- Understand research reception and uses
- Complimentary to citation based analysis

Download free bookmarklet from [Altmetric.it](http://Altmetric.it)

# Altmetric

## Hospitals as complex adaptive systems: A case study of factors influencing priority setting practices at the hospital level in Kenya

Overview of attention for article published in Social Science & Medicine, February 2017



### About this Attention Score

In the top 25% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric

MORE...

### Mentioned by

- 7 Twitterers
- 2 Facebook pages
- 1 research highlight platform

### Readers on

- 21 Mendeley

What is this page?

### SUMMARY

Twitter

Facebook

Research highlights

**Title** Hospitals as complex adaptive systems: A case study of factors influencing priority setting practices at the hospital level in Kenya

**Published in** Social Science & Medicine, February 2017

**DOI** 10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.12.026

**Pubmed ID** 28024239

**Authors** Barasa, Edwine W. Molyneux, Sassy, English, Mike, Cleary, Susan, Edwine W. Barasa, Sassy Molyneux... [show]

**Abstract** There is a dearth of literature on priority setting and resource allocation (PSRA) practices in... [show]

View on publisher site

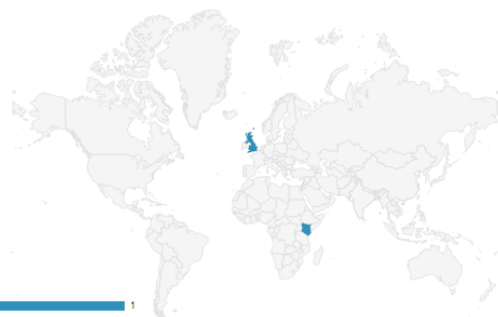
Alert me about new mentions

### TWITTER DEMOGRAPHICS

MENDELEY READERS

ATTENTION SCORE IN CONTEXT

The data shown below were collected from the profiles of 7 tweeters who shared this research output. [Click here to find out more about how the information was compiled.](#)



### Geographical breakdown

| Country        | Count | As % |
|----------------|-------|------|
| United Kingdom | 1     | 14%  |
| Kenya          | 1     | 14%  |
| Unknown        | 5     | 71%  |

### Demographic breakdown

| Type   | Count | As % |
|--|-------|------|
| Scientists   | 4     | 57%  |
| Members of the public                                  | 2     | 29%  |
| Science communicators (journalists, bloggers, editors) | 1     | 14%  |

## F1000Prime

Article Recommendations

ARTICLE RECOMMENDATIONS | RANKINGS | F1000PRIME REPORTS | F1000 FACULTY | BLOG

F1000Prime » Article Recommendations »

### Hospitals as complex adaptive systems: A case study of factors influencing priority setting practices at the hospital level in Kenya.

Barasa EW, Molyneux S, English M, Cleary S. Soc Sci Med. 2017 Feb; 174:104-112

Recommended by Jeffrey Braithwaite, Louise Ellis and Kate Churruar

08 Mar 2017 | New Finding

This paper presents case study research of the factors influencing priority setting practices in public first level referral hospitals (known as 'country hospitals') in Kenya. As the authors explain, there are currently no official guidelines in place on how priority setting should be undertaken at the country hospital level and, further, no research examining how the priority setting process is carried out in Kenya.

## F1000

is composed of 8,000 senior scientists and leading experts in all areas of biology and medicine.

The Faculty recommends the **most important articles**, rating them and providing short explanations for their selections.

# Altmetric

## Health sector operational planning and budgeting processes in Kenya—"never the twain shall meet"

Overview of attention for article published in The International Journal of Health Planning and Management, March 2015



About this Attention Score

In the top 25% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric

MORE...

Mentioned by

1 policy source  
1 tweeter

Readers on

11 Mendeley

What is this page?

SUMMARY

Policy documents

Twitter

So far, Altmetric has seen 4 policy documents that reference this research output.



### Aligning public financial management and health financing: sustaining progress toward universal health coverage

Cited by World Health Organization on 01 Jan 2017

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system.



### Strategizing national health in the 21st century: a handbook

Cited by World Health Organization on 01 Jan 2016

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system.



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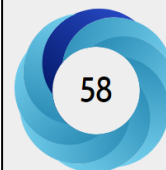
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## Everyday resilience in district health systems: emerging insights from the front lines in Kenya and South Africa

Overview of attention for article published in BMJ Global Health Journal, June 2017



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View on publisher site

Published in BMJ Global Health Journal, June 2017

DOI 10.1136/bmjgh-2016-002224

Authors Lucy Gilson, Edwine Barasa, Nonhlanhla Nyumalo, Susan Cleary, Jane Goudge, Sassy Maloney... [show]

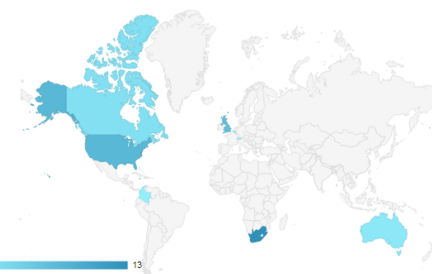
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| Country        | Count | As % |
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| South Africa   | 13    | 16%  |
| United States  | 8     | 10%  |
| United Kingdom | 7     | 9%   |

Demographic breakdown

| Type  | Count | As % |
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| Scientists  | 16    | 20%  |
| Practitioners (doctors, other healthcare professionals) | 10    | 13%  |



# Further resources on research uptake

- STRIVE – Knowledge into action [webpage](#)
- ODI RAPID – Successful communication – [a toolkit for researchers and CSOs](#)
- DRUSSA learning resource - various [guidance notes](#) on research communication, the engaging researcher
- Research to action website – 6 useful guides on communication strategy <http://www.researchtoaction.org/2012/08/six-useful-guides-on-communication-strategies/>
- RESYST [webinar](#) on demonstrating research impact
- [Wonkcomms.net](#)

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Becky Wolfe is a member of the Consortium for Resilient and Responsive Health Systems (RESYST). This document is an output from a project funded by the UK Aid from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for the benefit of developing countries. However, the views expressed and information contained in it are not necessarily those of or endorsed by DFID, which can accept no responsibility for such views or information or for any reliance placed on them.

